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LETTERS OF A
NOBLE WOMAN



1

**THE LETTERS OF
A NOBLE WOMAN**





MARIA LA TOUCHE
1854

From a miniature at Harristown



THE
LIFE OF
MRS. MARY
CARTER

By
J. H. [illegible]
[illegible]

THE LETTERS OF A NOBLE WOMAN

(MRS. LA TOUCHE OF HARRISTOWN)

i/

EDITED BY

MARGARET FERRIER YOUNG

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS selection of the late Mrs. La Touche's letters has been made that some slight memorial should exist of one who certainly understood the art of letter-writing—an art that is rapidly dying out in these strenuous and unrestful days. It is to be regretted that very few letters of her early years exist, and those that were obtainable of no general interest. But when one remembers the stirring times Ireland has passed through, and the many political ups and downs of the island, one wishes it had been possible to obtain some of those letters that described these events.

With few exceptions, none of her correspondence with her own family is included, and in preparing the slight sketch of her life for the press, only such details as would render the letters intelligible to the general reader have been retained: her family justly feeling that a long memoir was as unnecessary as it was undesirable.

Among her earlier correspondents was Louisa Lady Waterford, and in writing in 1860 to her friend Mrs. Bernal Osborne, she says: "How I wish you knew Mrs. La Touche! How you would enjoy her letters; here is a bit I thought so clever which she wrote to me lately:

" " Her¹ outward life is very uncongenial to mine,

¹ This referred to a friend.

and becomes more so every year. I feel as if I were a black-beetle, and she a great blue dragon-fly. She buzzes past me with a flash of colour and loud metallic hum, and I clap my two black wing-cases to my sides, and crouch in the shadow.'

"I think there is such fun and cleverness in that description."

To the end of her life Mrs. La Touche kept in touch, by means of the post, with a social world from which she had long severed herself, her most constant correspondent being her life-long friend and cousin, Mrs. Bishop. Unfortunately all this correspondence was destroyed on Mrs. Bishop's death in 1898, but the almost daily letter was continued to Miss Bishop (now Mrs. Hubert Burke), who lends a number for publication, and to whom for more than ordinary help and interest my grateful thanks are due.

Writing to Mrs. Bishop in 1892, Mr. R. H. Hutton (of the *Spectator*) mentions that in his opinion those letters he had seen¹ of Mrs. La Touche's were "real literature"; while, in the letters included in this volume, Ruskin's appreciation of her as a correspondent and a student of Nature is not lacking.²

Judge O'Connor Morris describes Mrs. La Touche as a "woman of singular charm and gifts. I would place her letters beside those of De Sévigny, if not exactly of the same style."³

The letters chosen for publication were addressed

¹ He himself was not a correspondent of hers.

² See pp. 72-73, 80-84, and 117-118.

³ "Thoughts and Memories of a Life," by W. O'Connor-Morris.

to intimate friends, and are on the ordinary everyday topics—her garden, the weather, the books read, and occasionally on politics. Like most Irish-women of her class, she was a keen follower of what went on in Parliament, but her political opinions, like her ideas on sport,¹ were often more decided than entirely correct.

It is hard to realise that the later letters included were written when nearing her eightieth year—at a time too, when she was enfeebled in health and almost crushed by sorrow—so little do they show signs of age, diminution of mental power, or lack of interest in the affairs of her household, or her friends.

The task of preparing this volume was made more difficult by the fact that few letters were dated, and all envelopes destroyed; and though in almost every case the dates have been sought for, mistakes may have been made, and inaccuracies will have crept in.

For leave to edit the book in the first place, and for much help and encouragement as the work went on, grateful acknowledgment is here made to Mr. Percy La Touche of Harristown, and to Mrs. John Hotham (Mrs. La Touche's only granddaughter). The illustrations were for the most part selected by Mr. La Touche, and permission accorded to reproduce family miniatures, &c., while to Mrs. Hubert Burke the same acknowledgment is due for allowing her sketch of Miss Rose La Touche to be copied.

To the Ruskin executors (including Mrs. Arthur

¹ See pp. 53-57, 109-113, and 124-126.

Severn, whose help has been unfailing), and to Messrs. Allen, publishers, for allowing the Ruskin letters to be used, I tender my thanks.

To many friends, not named, who aided and encouraged me in my work, and whose knowledge of literary methods was put at my disposal, my heartfelt thanks are offered.

This lack of literary skill, I can only hope, will not mar the impression I have tried to give in this selection of letters, of one who throughout a long life ever found her truest happiness in "the things that are more excellent," and whose passing into the Silent Land left those she had loved, and those she honoured with her friendship, bereft indeed.

MARGARET FERRIER YOUNG.



MEMOIR OF MRS. LA TOUCHE
OF HARRISTOWN

A

1

MARIA LA TOUCHE

ON December 15, 1824, a daughter was born at Desart Court, County Kilkenny, whose arrival was more or less a disappointment to her young parents, who had much desired a son. This child, the offspring of Catherine, Countess of Desart, and her second husband, Lieutenant Rose Lambart Price, grew up very proud of her Celtic origin. Her mother, the eldest daughter and heiress of Maurice O'Connor of Mount Pleasant in the King's County, had married in 1817, at the age of sixteen, John Otway Cuffe, 2nd Earl of Desart. The union only lasted till 1820, when Lord Desart died, leaving an only son, to whom his young mother was appointed guardian under her husband's will. The widow was married, in January 1824, to Lieutenant Rose Price, 78th Highlanders.

Her second husband's family, who once held great estates in the island of Jamaica, had settled near Penzance early in the eighteenth century, and there Rose Price, the father of Lady Desart's husband, was born on November 21, 1768. He was educated at Harrow and Magdalen College, Oxford, and then went out to the family estate in Jamaica, where he spent some years. Returning to Cornwall about 1816 he purchased Trengwainton,

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where he built a large house. It is said that he brought with him from the West Indies many slave-driving ways, but his popularity was undoubted, and to this day his memory is kept green in Cornwall. He planted woods, built extensively, and did much to improve his property. Granite Hill, near Penzance, which before 1817 had been a bare, bleak object in the landscape, is now richly wooded, and it is hard to believe that less than one hundred years ago not a tree was there to be seen.

In 1814 Mr. Price was made a baronet. He, too, married an Irishwoman—Elizabeth, younger daughter of Charles Lambart of Beauparc, County Meath. The marriage was blessed with fourteen children. Rose, who married Lady Desart, was the eldest son. He only survived his marriage two years, dying in London, when his little daughter was but fifteen months old, and leaving his wife at twenty-six a widow for the second time. By *his* will Captain Price left directions that his child was to spend six months of the year in England, and on this account Lady Desart made her home during the winter in Brighton, returning to Desart for the summer, where her son, the young earl, who had been sent to an English public school, joined her for his holidays.

These early years are best described in Mrs. La Touche's own words, written many years ago for the benefit of a younger generation.

"Sixty years ago I was a naughty little girl and my name was Polly" (she had been christened Maria after her maternal grandmother, Mrs. O'Connor, *née* a Burke, of Marble Hill, County



Galway). "In those days little girls never had pretty names, nor pretty frocks, nor even pretty books ; but they were expected to have *very* pretty manners, and to be very respectful to their elders—to stand up very straight and still when they were spoken to ; to answer questions plainly and in good English, but never to ask any, nor make remarks, nor imagine for a moment they were 'persons.' Every-day life was different then to what it is now. There were no railways, no telegraphs, no postage stamps, no lucifer matches—in short, no way of doing anything in a hurry.

"One of my earliest impressions was that of seeing my nurse strike a light in the middle of the night. It was like witnessing a miracle. There must have been some emergency to necessitate this marvel, but what it was I forget. All I remember is, that after long and patient labours, heard but not seen, there arose a feeble little blue flame at the end of a sulphur match. Where could it have come from? Nurse had only opened in the dark a round tin box, groped for a stone and a bit of steel, knocked them together—not sparing her own knuckles—over some untidy bits of half-scorched white rag, till sparks started out, the rags began to smoulder, and by dint of skill and management the sulphur match became just capable of lighting the nursery tallow candle. Composite candles were then unknown ; in those sincere and thoroughgoing days we had nothing between pure wax and unmitigated tallow. The tinder-box, or Origin of Fire, became to me, after that experience, as the shrine of some terrible

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demon ; not a thing to remain in the room alone with !

“ Taking a journey was a serious business sixty years ago. My home was then in the south of Ireland, but I had to be educated. The teaching of the woods and fields (only too eagerly received) was not enough. So every year we went to Brighton ; and back again after a few months in that glaring centre of civilisation, where I loved the sea and the downs, and hated everything else, particularly my writing-master, my walks on the brick pavements, and, I am sorry to say, my religious privileges on Sundays and Wednesday afternoons.

“ But the journeys ! First a day’s slow posting in a big carriage, with its own special big trunks—the imperial, the cap case, the sword case, mystic and unaccountable names, to this day suggestive to me of leathery smells, and a small, sad child watching the packing, which to her meant good-bye to Paradise. But the journey. First long hours of posting with broken-kneed horses, patched harness, and ragged post-boys (not always sober), to the port of Waterford. Then from twenty-four to thirty-six hours of bewildering misery. We had our big carriage fastened on deck as an alternative shelter, and sometimes my elders passed the night in it. It was considered best for me to be in bed, so I was consigned to the rocking dungeon below.

“ It was, however, delightful, when morning came, to get upon the smooth waters of the River Avon, and admire its lovely wooded banks from a green bench on the level deck ; to land at Bristol,



and sleep in a motionless bed, returning in dreams to the great oak and the beech grove, and the dear, dear swamp, with its wild ducks and its bul-rushes, which, by the way, I was seldom allowed to visit, as mysterious powers called Fever and Ague were said to live there, but I disbelieved in their existence.

"Then after this dreamland in a British hotel came two long days of brisk posting in the big carriage; with a night between at Southampton or Salisbury, and a thousand little delights all along the road, which I always felt I ought not to be capable of enjoying, except on the return journey: for was I not on my way to the writing-master, the brick pavements, and the unventilated church? Still it was pleasant to see the horses changed, to walk up the hills, to gather travellers' joy and bryony in the hedges, and pick up bits of flint and red sandstone from the alien soil, refusing to think them prettier than the broken limestone of my native roads. How different all this was from the journeys of to-day. The annual joy of my life was the return, in the early summer, to my beloved woods and swamps with their rhododendron thickets, their green glades all floored with bluebell and anemone, their delicate weedy pools, where azure dragon-flies flitted across the shadows, and king-cups shone beside the dark water like golden lamps.

"What else can I tell you of child-life sixty years ago? I am not sure that the little people of 1893 have a much better time than those of 1830. You can't really enjoy your diversions very much when they come too fast and in too great variety:

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and as far as books, there is really no lasting pleasure in galloping through a succession of red, blue, and green story-books, and then forgetting all about the good and naughty heroes and heroines—after having realised that all the good ones died and the bad ones repented and reformed. When I was a child I had endless delight in just a few books of my very own, which stood on a low shelf in the school-room just on a level with eight-year-old eyes: books that told the very things I wanted to know—about the habits of animals, the wonderful things done by bees and ants, the travels and home life of birds, with pictures of thrilling interest, woodcuts that showed how butterflies came out of their crysalids, how tadpoles lost their tails and turned into frogs, and what wonders were hid in the perilous depths of a wasps'-nest. I had a few story-books too, and read them over and over again with undiminished enjoyment. It never occurred to me to wish for new ones. In those days little girls seldom presumed to wish for anything; they took a deep and deliberate enjoyment out of such simple pleasures as they possessed, and were not 'given to change,' as we all are in these restless days.

"Still I must confess that when I was a little girl I stupidly failed to enjoy some things that ought to have given me pleasure. Once, and once only, I was taken to a Children's Ball. You may imagine how long ago it was when I tell you it was given by King William IV. and Queen Adelaide in the Chinese Pavilion, which was the royal residence at Brighton. I well remember my little white frock,

short white silk socks, and white shoes : my mortification and sorrow at hearing my mother say to the dressmaker that it all must be perfectly plain—no flowers, no ribbons, no necklace even. I had hoped to be made as brilliant as a humming-bird, to please King William and myself. When the occasion arrived I was taken at bedtime into a wonderful place, full of light and flowers and great china images with shaking heads, and quantities of little and big people dressed in beautiful clothes. It all seemed like a dream and did not frighten me at all, though I did not like being asked to dance by little boys in velvet frocks, and having to answer, 'No, thank you, I do not know how to dance.' Perhaps the least uncomfortable moment in the whole evening was when I found myself picked up and kissed by a nice old gentleman and lady, who I thought looked like everybody's uncle and aunt, though I knew they were the King and Queen. I had a feeling that they *must* be good and kind, because they were so much prayed for in all the churches.

"Even now I can see in my mind's eye the long, brilliantly-lighted supper tables, and the wonderful and beautiful things my mother (very properly) would not allow me to eat at midnight. Not that I had dreamt of touching them ; they were far too much unlike bread and milk or stirabout to tempt a child who could not even imagine a supper of anything else !

"When I look back through the long years to that night's royal festivity, I remember it, not as a pleasure, but as a long and solemn experience

among strange and dazzling surroundings, and also as a weary effort to 'be good' and live up to my white satin shoes and frock, saying and doing nothing inconsistent with such spotless raiment. In the present day young people do not take life so seriously; it is not so much impressed on them that in the midst of amusement they still have duties and obligations, and are still under the law of obedience. They are not much cautioned against selfishness and frivolity. Perhaps the children of 1893 can really enjoy costly artificial pleasures that were lost on the simpler and less-emancipated children of sixty years ago."

Talking over her early childhood Mrs. La Touche always maintained that her mother had been far before her time in ideas of hygiene and physical culture.

She was a very devoted mother, and most anxious about her children's education. Her ideas on dress were a great trial to her little daughter, who could not bear the "dull, ugly" clothes she was given, and remembered going to church in a spirit of great thankfulness for a little bit of velvet on the collar of her brown cloth cloak.

In later years, when she read the "Life of Miss Frances Power Cobbe," all her Brighton experiences came vividly back to her, they having been contemporaries, though quite unknown to one another.

Her brother's Christmas holidays were times of great delight to the rather lonely little girl, and it was no small regret when a "command" came from the Pavilion for him to go and play with Prince

George of Cambridge and other princelings. It added much to her sorrow, that if by chance when walking with her nurse she met her brother and his exalted companions, he took no notice of her, explaining privately that she was only a *little* girl. She was, however, not without friends of her own, and two little girls, the daughters of Lady Hill, were her close companions both at Brighton and at Desart, where they paid an annual visit.

Lady Desart was most anxious that her daughter should have the best masters Brighton could produce, and very long indeed were the hours given to study. Music she disliked as a child, while drawing always gave her a great pleasure. There are in existence some drawings in perspective, quite wonderful considering her age, of the various houses Lady Desart took for her winters in Brighton.

When she was twelve she wrote a little poem called the "Sea Mew," and sent it to a Brighton paper, quite unknown to her "authorities." To her delight it was accepted and published. But her budding joy was not shared by her mother, who considered that it was an underhand thing to do. Certainly Lady Desart's adverse criticism rather nipped in the bud any further poetic effort for a time.

In 1839 Lady Desart, accompanied by her daughter, and her sister-in-law, Miss Anna Price, spent some time on the Continent, posting through France to Geneva, where they remained for several months. This journey was full of delight for Maria, who at that time dearly loved travelling, but it was

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meant to be in some degree educational, and once settled in Geneva the days were given up to masters and mistresses.

At this time an old friend of Lady Desart's was living in Geneva, Lady Brandon (*née* La Touche) with her only daughter,¹ and their meeting laid the foundation of a firm friendship between the girls, a friendship which was continued for nearly seventy years.

In connection with this tour Mrs. La Touche wrote long after to a friend, who was eager to take her daughter to Paris to see the sights from an educational point of view: "Do you know that at the age of fifteen and a half I was nearly killed by being shown the sights of Paris, and having a very amusing time there in a hot July? My mother took me 'an instructive journey' home from Geneva, showed me picture-galleries, palaces, cathedrals and things, to such an extent that, when I got back to Brighton, I went into what the doctor said was a rapid decline, and I was reduced to sofas and bath-chairs for about three months. That is why my education was stopped; and for the future I had no more than I could give myself, and only such masters as I asked for. I am more than ever convinced that a quiet, healthy, outdoor life is what is best for the female creature till she's grown up."

Lord Desart had married in 1842, and now lived on his Irish estate. His mother, who during his minority had spent her summers at Desart, had taken a small place in Wicklow, where she and her daughter settled on their return from abroad. In

¹ Cecilia Crosbie, afterwards the Hon. Mrs. Yorke.

1842 she went to London for the season, when Miss Price was presented to Queen Victoria.

This "coming out" was described by Mrs. La Touche, in after years, as one of the penances of her life. Her clothes were not right (till taken in hand by her newly married sister-in-law). The constant going out, the stiff ride in the Row (her only exercise), the perpetual meeting of strangers, combined to turn her one London season into a nightmare of after memory.

Almack's was then at the height of its popularity. Its balls were managed by a committee of ladies of high rank, and the one virtue on which they prided themselves was exclusiveness.

"If once to Almack's you belong,
Like monarchs you can do no wrong,
But, banished thence on Wednesday night,
By Jove, you can do nothing right."

LUTTRELL.

But even the *entrée* at Almack's was but an added annoyance to the girl, who loved the country and all its pleasures, and whose love of nature remained so strong till the end of her life.

If, as she always averred, her education had been stopped at fifteen and a half, she certainly carried it on all her life afterwards, and, as far as accomplishments went, was far ahead of most of her acquaintances. She was a skilful artist, her studies of flowers being highly approved of, and, in addition, an excellent linguist; while her general reading all her life was extensive.

In the early spring of 1843 Miss Price's

engagement to Mr. John La Touche of Harristown was announced, and in the May of that year they were married. Marriage meant emancipation, for Lady Desart's ideas on education and on the upbringing of young people had been of the strictest. Her ideas, too, on food had been odd, and her daughter had never known the taste of many quite ordinary dishes until her wedding day. Cakes of all sorts had been forbidden, and the wedding journey to Desart was beguiled by acquiring this entirely new taste.

In describing her wedding, which took place from the Bilton Hotel, Dublin, Mrs. La Touche always said her delight in her new and important-looking clothes was tempered by the fact that she was the "centre of a fuss"—a thing she hated—while the great joy of that day was going back to Desart and its woods.

After all, at nineteen, the serious side of life seldom appeals to one, and it certainly did not to this particular bride.

The family history of the La Touches reads like a romance. Long before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes the Dignes de la Touche were powerful Seigneurs of Blois, and much in favour at the court of Louis XIV.

The tradition is that several members of the family, professing Protestantism, had to flee to Holland, and the founder of the family in Ireland, David Dignes de la Touche, after refusing (at the prayer of his elder brother Paul) to abjure Protestantism, took arms for William of Orange. Although very young, he became a captain in



HARRISTOWN HOUSE
North side

Caillmot's Brigade, which fought so valiantly at the Battle of the Boyne.¹

On the disbanding of this regiment in Dublin young La Touche found himself surrounded by Dutch and French Protestants, most of them in great poverty (neither gratitude nor justice being strong points in William's character), and he, having some money and a good deal of energy, started a silk, poplin, and cambric factory in Dublin, in this way giving employment to his fellow-countrymen.

This venture proving a success, many of the Huguenots who wished to wander further afield left their money in Captain La Touche's hands, thus founding the La Touche Bank in Castle Street, Dublin, "which remained stable amid all changes, and was honoured wherever it was known." It was to John La Touche, the grandson of the founder of the bank, that Harristown owes its existence. He had acquired the property from the representatives of the Fitz-Eustace family, whose head was Lord Portlester.

At the time of Miss Price's marriage, her father-in-law, Robert La Touche (long one of the members of Parliament² for County Kildare), was alive. He had married in 1810 Lady Emily Trench (daughter of the Earl of Clancarty), who had died many years

¹ Mrs. La Touche's great uncle, Gerald O'Connor, fought too at this battle, but for King James.

² In the last Irish Parliament no less than five members of the name (La Touche) sat together in the House of Commons, and this family may claim, what is in truth the highest honour of which an Irish family can boast—that during many successive Governments, and in a period of the most lavish corruption, it possessed great parliamentary influence, and yet passed through political life untitled and unstained.—From Lecky's "History of Ireland."

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before, leaving him with a large family, of whom only four survived at the time of his eldest son's marriage. Mr. Robert La Touche died in 1844, when the young people may be said to have come into their kingdom.

To the last day of her life Mrs. La Touche's love for Harristown, its woods and gardens, and, above all, the river,¹ was very great, and her abounding love of nature comes out strongly in her letters. Three children were born to Mr. and Mrs. La Touche—Emily in 1844, Percy in 1846, and Rose in 1849.

Life in rural Ireland sixty years ago must have been different in many essentials from life in Kildare to-day. It certainly was less complicated. Hunting was a serious business, not an absorbing amusement; and although in the early years of her marriage her husband was Master of the Kildare Hounds, Mrs. La Touche was never an intrepid horsewoman. She often described herself as very "social and sociable" in those early days of her marriage, yet her pleasures were always strongly intellectual. She once wrote two novels, more as an amusement than for graver reasons. Perhaps because of this they were not successful, and are now quite forgotten.

Reading the old diaries kept by Mrs. La Touche, one is struck by the fact that while her children's education was going on they became mere records of each child's progress. All these interests, literary and educational, were not likely to find general favour, and perhaps it was this lack of approval that led Mrs. La Touche to withdraw herself a good deal

¹ The River Liffey.



PERCY LA TOUCHE, 1854

From a miniature
Lent by LADY ANNETTE LA TOUCHE

from those people with whom she had but little in common. With Lady Drogheda, Lady Cloncurry, Miss O'Connor Morris, and a few others, a "Society of Souls" was formed (though not under that name¹), but its exclusiveness, as a certain standard of intellectuality was to be observed, killed it: but not before "Bœotia" had well ridiculed both the promoters and their followers. Still, looking back, one sees in these efforts to create a higher sphere of thought, in striving after more rational amusements, something to approve of and little to condemn. Mistakes were, of course, made in the selection of friends, and the Society died unregretted, though it was often referred to with a mixture of laughter and sadness when the original members met in after years.

It is to be regretted that very few letters of those early years exist, and those that are available, of no general interest. But when one remembers the stirring times Ireland has passed through, the Famine and the Fenian rising, one wishes some of the earlier ones had been preserved.

There are many traditions of the privations of the La Touche family during the Famine, as Mr. La Touche allowed no white bread or pastry to be made, and only the simplest of dishes to appear on his table. The deer-park at Harristown ceased at this time to have any deer in it; all were made into food for the starving people. In this Mr. La Touche carried out the strongly expressed opinion

¹ The name given was the "Alethemene," the members all taking names from the classics—Stella, Lesbia, Lycidas, and Alethea (this last being Mrs. La Touche's name), and others now quite forgotten.

than the majority,' a truth obviously needing qualification, and clearly anti-Catholic, and anti-democratic. . . .

"If she was religiously hostile to anything, it was to narrowness, bitterness, little-mindedness, and above all hypocrisy.

"Her brilliant tract, the 'Bitter Cry of Esau,' shows how much she suffered once, from the pressure of religious exclusiveness and fanaticism."¹

In 1866 Emily La Touche married Major the Hon. Bernard Ward, of the 32nd Light Infantry, and to the great grief of her family died two years afterwards on her way home from the Mauritius, leaving two tiny children, Rose born in 1867, and Ernest in 1868.

In May 1875 Rose La Touche died after a long and trying illness. She had grown up very beautiful, very intellectual, and not at all amenable to family traditions. All her life she had suffered from ill-health, and regular lessons had often been interrupted, but her love of knowledge and of nature was wonderful.

Her friendship for Ruskin has been so much discussed and written about—giving much pain to those members of her family who survive—that very little need be said here. Ruskin was ever an educationalist, and even in that *rôle* he made mistakes. The idea that he cared for her in any other way than that of a master for a pupil, does not appear to have dawned on any one's mind—least of all on her father and mother—till

¹ This tract has long been out of print; and its arguments, as well as its brilliancy, might be questioned in these more tolerant days.

matters had gone far. Rose did not want to marry Ruskin, but her parents could not bring her to see that continuing her friendship with him was encouraging his misplaced hopes.

Rose inherited much of her mother's talent, but without her ready wit; the few poems which exist, though beautiful, are decidedly morbid.¹ She, too, had the same love of nature, the same facility of expression, marred at the end of her life by despondency, the outcome of her ill-health.

Her death left Mr. and Mrs. La Touche alone

¹ The following poem, in her daughter's handwriting, was found in the Bible constantly used by Mrs. La Touche :—

I.

" I heard a voice from far away
As I lay dull and sad
(For very grief I could not pray
To Him who makes us glad) ;
Yet, like the words a friend might
say,
It stilled the pain I had.

II.

' He who hath balm for all our pain
Knows every grief of ours ;
We shall not cry to Him in vain
In life's most hopeless hours.
Oh, doubting heart, look up again ;
He will revive thy powers.

III.

We weep for every vanished thing,
We call the winter long,
'Tis but the hush before the spring,
When all things wake in song,
And thou too shalt rejoice and sing,
Who now hast mourned so long.

IV.

We, when our earthly joys depart,
Turn from His love divine,
And let each vain regretful smart
Through all our souls entwine.
Oh, child, the God who knows
each heart
Could heal this pain of thine.'

V.

The tears no longer dimmed my eyes,
I was no more oppressed ;
Strong in God's strength I will arise,
And He will give me rest.
Touched with the Light of Paradise
Life's darkest hours are blest."

January 30, 1870.

ROSE LUCY LA TOUCHE.

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at Harristown except for the annual visits of the grandchildren, Mrs. Bishop and her daughter, and other friends.

The grandchildren were a deep interest to Mrs. La Touche, and one can understand to whom she referred when in writing of her granddaughter she says: "Rose is so good—not talented nor brilliant, perhaps, but plodding and painstaking, and so good at her needle. She is not like any of us, but perhaps it is better so."¹

During those winters spent at Harristown the Kilcullen Dorcas Society, which had been founded by Mrs. Wakefield, a friend and neighbour, took up much of Mrs. La Touche's time, and the subject is often mentioned in her letters. For thirty years the Society did good work in Kildare among the poor and sick, and now that it has ceased to exist is much regretted.

In addition to poems and many letters to the newspapers, Mrs. La Touche at this time wrote several *brochures*, one of which exists, on the subject of dress.² She approached the matter very seriously; but what was wrong in the "sixties" is, at least in Ireland, much worse in 1908. Some extracts may be of interest, but she sorrowfully admitted that her "preaching" did no good, and only ruffled her poorer neighbours.

"Our wrong feeling induces us to clothe ourselves that we may be mistaken for something different from what we really are. If we are

¹ Letter dated 1880, to Mrs. Severn.

² "About Dress." By Mrs. La Touche of Harristown.

working women, it is a wrong feeling to wish to look as if we did nothing all day—a terribly wrong feeling—for it has a good deal to do with being ashamed of what is right and good, and proud of what is very wrong, namely, idleness. It should be the pride of a working woman to be ready and able for work, and if she is so she ought to look so. . . .

“It is false and deceitful to tell people by our appearance and dress that we are rich when in reality we are poor, that we are young when in truth we are old, that we are idle women when the fact is we are busy ones. The Father of Lies has something to do with such conduct. There are plenty of women of all classes who are guilty of it, especially in Great Britain and Ireland. . . .

“The true and right principle about dress is the same for a working woman as for a duchess—to wear such clothes as we can pursue our accustomed occupation in without spoiling them; to look like what we are and not like what we are not; to be comfortable, in and out of doors; and to have a pleasant, and, if possible, a pretty appearance. I put this *last*, but still I do put it.

“. . . The real and great evil that lies at the bottom of all our mistakes about dress is the base and disgraceful infirmity we have of being ashamed of what is right and not ashamed of what is wrong. It does seem strange, if we come to think of it, that a girl who can answer the question, ‘What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?’ in the true, good noble words of our Church Catechism, should have her mind so perverted and so mistaken. She knows she ought to love, honour, and succour her father and

mother, but it is not honouring her father much to be ashamed of him being a day labourer, and wishing to look as if she was the child of somebody else. It is not ordering herself lowly and reverently to all her betters to dress up as a caricature of the squire's daughters. And a girl is not likely to learn and labour truly to get her own living and do her duty in that state of life unto which it should please God to call her if she thinks labour a thing to be ashamed of, and wishes God had called her to a state of life in which she could wear silk and lace."

Another and deeply interesting bit of literary work done by Mrs. La Touche was translating, with her cousin, Mrs. Bishop, the "*Meditations of Mrs. Augustus Craven*." Mrs. La Touche's translation might be considered more free than actually correct, but her English, like Mrs. Bishop's, had a rare distinction; and the collaboration of those two ladies gave the utmost pleasure to the authoress, a pleasure she expressed in a very grateful note of thanks.

It was in September 1877 I first made Mrs. La Touche's acquaintance. Her son-in-law had been seeking a governess for his children, and I happened to be the successful applicant. Mrs. La Touche was too keen on education to let the appointment be ratified without a personal inspection, so an interview was arranged. At first I was much frightened, as Mrs. La Touche was hardly conciliatory, and though she asked no questions as to acquirements she looked, as I expressed it afterwards, "regal and severe." Only those who have passed through a similar ordeal can understand my feelings

on the occasion. While Colonel Ward spoke of his anxiety for the welfare educationally of the children, Mrs. La Touche seemed more anxious to find out whether I knew the difference between a hawkweed and a dandelion, or the correct number of legs belonging to a spider. Fortunately my small knowledge of botany and natural history stood the test, and our long friendship began.

Some years before, Mrs. La Touche's only son had married Lady Annette Scott, daughter of the third Earl of Clonmell, and until his father's death, when Harristown became his, he lived at Newberry, quite near to his parents.

After their daughter's¹ death Mr. and Mrs. La Touche spent part of their winters abroad—Mentone being much beloved by the "Master,"² who found his friend Mr. Spurgeon there, while to Mrs. La Touche the sunshine (so different from an Irish winter), the flowers, and the long walks, were a constant delight.

In the summer of 1883 Mr. and Mrs. La Touche were at Coniston, and they paid their first visit to Brantwood. For some years Mrs. La Touche had not seen Ruskin, the relations after her daughter's death being much strained; but this visit put things on a different footing, and was a time of great enjoyment to all concerned.

When Mr. La Touche returned to Ireland his wife stayed with Ruskin and Mrs. Severn at Brantwood, and later in the same year she had the

¹ Rose.

² Mr. La Touche was always so designated by his friends, while his father, who died in 1844, was referred to as the "Old Master."

pleasure of welcoming Mrs. and Mr. Arthur Severn at Harristown. While there Mr. Severn paid his first visit to the coast of Clare, which Mrs. La Touche had so graphically described to him as well as to Ruskin.¹

The next year (1884) Mrs. La Touche paid another visit to Brantwood, beginning with ten days at the Waterhead Hotel, during which I was her companion; and the delights of that visit, its constant days at Brantwood, with Ruskin in his most genial as well as most instructive mood, are unforgettable. Mrs. La Touche was untirable as far as walking and climbing went; but we did not achieve the top of the Old Man, as the "other Old Man" beguiled us so often across the lake.

In December 1884 Mr. La Touche took a villa at Mentone, when they paid their last visit to the south of France. It was a time of great enjoyment, and Mrs. La Touche's housekeeping experiences, as set forth in her letters, were highly amusing. At this time of her life she cordially hated anything to do with household management, but her praise of the little house, and the lack of "vassals and serfs" is sincere, and she always maintained that this taste of "villa" life made her always afterwards long for a tiny house and only a few maids.

She also had the pleasure of renewing some old friendships, notably that with Dr. and Mrs. George MacDonald, then living at Bordighera. This was a real joy to her, as she and her daughter Rose had seen much of this gifted family during the winters spent in London.

¹ First letter of all.

About this time the Irish Question was in one of its acute stages, and as times were bad for landlords there were great reductions in the establishment at Harristown. Among the luxuries Mrs. La Touche gave up for a time, were her carriage with its pair of ponies. They were bought by a friend and neighbour, Mr. Mitchell of Ballynure, according to Mrs. La Touche "the only philosopher in Kildare." Unfortunately a set of Norwegian harness bells was, by mistake, sold too. These bells had been a gift from a very important person in Kildare, and the incident caused some heartburning. Two letters in rhyme, which I have included, were the outcome of the mistake.

On the return journey from Mentone, Mr. La Touche was seized with sudden illness at Dijon; and the difficulties of getting doctors and attention in a foreign hotel, and the long homeward journey in his invalid state, reconciled Mrs. La Touche to never afterwards "crossing two seas" in search of change.

After this, for several years, a winter's visit to Tunbridge Wells was accomplished, where Mrs. La Touche had the pleasure of seeing her cousin and lifelong friend Mrs. Bishop, and at her house meeting many interesting and delightful people in the world of literature and art. Unfortunately no letters to this cousin and friend have been preserved.

The years that followed were very quiet and uneventful. Summer saw a few visitors at Harristown, and almost invariably the two grandchildren—now grown up—spent part of the year there.

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The burning of Harristown in March 1891 was a terrible blow to both Mr. and Mrs. La Touche—especially the former. The fire broke out in the early hours of the afternoon, and before night-fall the place was a ruin. Much was saved from the lower rooms, but some fine pieces of statuary in the hall, from their great weight, could not be moved, and so perished. At no time was her pluck and endurance more noticeable, and among the letters written at that time she makes no mention of her own personal discomfort, but thinks only of her husband's grief for the loss of his lifelong home.

A friend writes: "I was much struck by her wisdom and calmness at the destruction of Harristown by fire, and of so many really beautiful works of art. No doubt she had never quite taken root there, or indeed in the county. She felt herself 'living in Bœotia,' and perhaps was not capable of loving house, furniture, goods, and chattels quite as ordinary folk. Still, it is a great test of character to see one's home destroyed, and for some years to live in a cottage near one's own entrance. To my surprise she quite welcomed being brought more on a level with average human beings, seeing them pass her windows, and becoming acquainted with them and their lives. While staying in the cottage she said to me one day that she doubted much if it were right to 'live at the end of long avenues far away from one's fellow-creatures.' I was from the beginning of my acquaintance with her much encouraged by her love for the House of God. As long as it was possible for her she walked to church twice



on Sunday and to our week-day services, but towards the end of her life she was seldom able to come."

Life in the little house at Brannoxtown had, as this letter describes, many advantages, and it enabled Mr. La Touche to superintend the building of New Harristown, in which, it must be confessed, Mrs. La Touche took but indifferent interest. All her life she said she hated new things, houses, clothes, or people. The little garden at Brannoxtown became a delight, but her weedings and pokings in her new demesne were a little marred by the arrival of members of the mendicant profession, who were delighted to see her "ladyship" without the trouble of walking up a mile of avenue. The house was very small, and it was difficult to put up any visitors, and as there was no stable accommodation, no one thought of calling who had any distance to drive, but those who knew Mrs. La Touche best, knew she was wonderfully supported under such drawbacks, and when the time came to say good-bye to the Brannoxtown cottage it was said with real regret.

In September 1893 Harristown was again occupied; and though in point of comfort the new house could not in any way be compared to the old one, and its deficiencies became daily more evident, yet the Master expressed himself more than satisfied, and Mrs. La Touche found *her* compensations outside, in the garden and by the river.

Few journeys were taken after this. The winters were for the most part spent in a Dublin

hotel. And when that hotel was the Shelbourne, Mrs. La Touche found much delight in watching the feathered folk in St. Stephen's Green, and her friends were charmed with her word-pictures of the bird-life that passed before her observant eyes.

The years that followed were quite uneventful. Mrs. La Touche suffered more or less from cardiac asthma, which caused her to spend more time in Dublin undergoing treatment, and generally Mr. La Touche joined her for the winter months.

All her friends found it hard to believe that she was old and feeble, and not always able to see them, as when they were admitted she made great efforts—paying for these afterwards—to amuse and entertain them.

In September 1903 Mr. La Touche was stricken with a terrible illness, necessitating a critical operation, which relieved the agony, and prolonged his life for exactly one year. On his ninetieth birthday, 1904, he died. Only those who were with her could ever realise what this year was to Mrs. La Touche, who found herself overwhelmed with business matters she had never before been accustomed to, and though a good deal of secretarial work could be done by others, there were matters to which she alone could attend.

On her husband's death the property passed to her son, and Mrs. La Touche, after a life of sixty-two years at Harristown, left it to live henceforth in the suburbs of Dublin.

A little pressure was at first put on Mrs. La Touche to live in England, where her friends assured her a better climate was to be found, but

to this she would not consent, and she expressed herself perfectly happy in the two houses she had in Dublin.

The summer of 1906 was very hot and trying, and even those who were habitually with Mrs. La Touche saw her becoming weaker. One by one the habits of a lifetime were given up, and by the end of June it was a recognised fact that she never went downstairs—spending her days between her bedroom, which looked into the beautiful park belonging to the Jesuit Fathers, at Milltown, and the little boudoir, where from its window she had glimpses of the sea, and of Howth's fine headland. Her sufferings from breathlessness and weakness were acute at times, causing long, wakeful nights, but her courage and patience were marvellous. No one ever heard her grumble; and her faculty for making the best of things, in a confined and unaccustomed sphere, was never more evident than in those last months of her life. In August her sufferings from breathlessness were so great that a small operation was suggested to relieve the overburdened lungs. This was carried out, and was even more successful than could have been expected, taking into consideration Mrs. La Touche's age and enfeebled condition. It was an anxious time for those who watched beside her, and it was with great thankfulness they saw her better before the end of the month, and again able to see those members of her family and friends who happened to be in Dublin.

Her son-in-law, General Ward, came and saw

her, and she had also her granddaughter, and the "remotest descendant," Angela Hotham.¹

Lord and Lady Desart came for a day—a visit that gave her the greatest pleasure, and which they never failed to pay as they passed from the one island to the other.

Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Burke were with Mrs. La Touche in August, too, the latter staying till October, a visit that brightened the sad time of year a good deal for the patient, but very few of those who called to inquire could now be admitted, as any sustained efforts of either speaking or listening seemed only to bring on restless nights. Several times when Kildare friends saw her, she seemed to feel that she was not likely to see them again; and though in no case was there ever any formal farewell, one felt that soon visitors would need to be restricted to her own immediate family.

By November, only on very rare occasions did she leave her room; but on the 20th she seemed much better, and was delighted to see her son and his wife, who had been paying visits at houses she had known in her youth. As the afternoon wore on, she repeated to me much of the conversation she had with Mr. Percy La Touche, and expressed a wish that a messenger should be sent to inquire after a relative at that time very ill. She mentioned, too, that next day would be the second anniversary of her leaving her old home.

For long she had always hoped that when her time came she would go swiftly; and some

¹ Great-granddaughter—born March 7, 1902.

lines by Whittier, which she found in Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's Diaries, expressed her feelings exactly—

“Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay.”

She had no fear of death, and often spoke calmly of the time when she too would go, but she *did* dread a long time to wait for release, from what at times was very real suffering. She certainly was “preserved through the very valley of death from all fear and impatience, from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's Spirit's glorious work.”

No one realised that the end was so near that day, as, after reading to her while she knitted one of the little garments meant for charity, I left the room to speak to the nurse who was to be on duty during the night. On my return she asked, “Why were you so long, and who were you talking to in the library?” As we had never dignified the little room by such a name, for a moment I was puzzled, but said, “I was speaking to Nurse.” “I heard the Master's voice, though,” she said.

Only then was it evident that she was wandering a little. Going up to her I said, “We are not at home; we are in Dublin.” “Oh, no,” she replied, “for I see the river.” For a brief moment she had gone back in her thoughts to her home of sixty-two years, and the sights her eyes had so

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loved were hers again. With this vivid impression of the past before her closing eyes, the end came swiftly and peacefully.

Some weeks before her death she lost one of her oldest friends, Lady Higginson of Connalmore. Miss Higginson's letter giving details of her mother's death and very simple funeral touched Mrs. La Touche deeply. She said emphatically, "When my time comes ask Percy to let it be like that."

Those wishes were most carefully carried out by her son; and though some of her nearest and dearest were far away, others came long distances, and several of her old neighbours and older friends were there.

The service in the little church where she had worshipped in early days, and whose services she loved dearly to the end, was one to be remembered.

Her remains were placed in the family vault beside those of her husband; and of the mourners who stood round on that lovely bright November morning, there was not one who could not echo her own words written about her friend Lady Waterford: "There is none like her, none."

THE LETTERS OF
MRS. LA TOUCHE

(WITH WHICH ARE INCLUDED SOME
FROM RUSKIN TO HER)

LETTERS

[THIS first letter to Mr. Ruskin is referred to by him in the "L'Esterelle" chapter of *Præterita* (§ 51), when he first made the acquaintance of Mrs. La Touche and her children. He describes there his first visit to Norfolk Street and finding Mrs. La Touche "the sort of person I expected, but a good deal more than I expected. . . . Extremely pretty still herself, nor at all too old to learn many things; but mainly anxious for her children." The name given to Mr. Ruskin—St. Chrysostom—dates from this time, and in the letters which follow he is generally referred to as "St. C."]

24 NORFOLK STREET, PARK LANE, Feb. 1858.

MY DEAR MR. RUSKIN,—I have too long delayed thanking you, in my own name and Rose's, for the pleasant hours we spent last Thursday.¹ You, who live with, and for Art, will not easily guess how much enjoyment you afforded to me who am wholly unaccustomed to such an atmosphere—out of Dream-land. The "Val D'Aosta," and the Rossetti, and some of the Turners, have been before me ever since. Rose was very eloquent about them on the way home; she will not forget them, and will refer

[¹ At Denmark Hill.]

to them in memory hereafter with better understanding of their meaning.

Altogether we owe "the immortal memory of one happy day" to Mrs. Ruskin's kindness and yours, and more beautiful than all past sunsets was that which we saw on our way home; it was the interpretation, or rather it seemed to me the Apotheosis of one or two of the Turners you had shown me, one of those skies no one else ever attempted to paint, and under it this evil London glorified into a shadowy semblance of the new Jerusalem, a city of sapphire and gold.

It is a great consolation to me here that my windows look towards the sunset: at home there would be a purple tracery of winter trees between me and the sky, and only a glow on the river's face to reveal what it saw.

I have been wishing ever since that you could see and tell the world about the Atlantic. I have never seen the Mediterranean, nor the subdued sea that sleeps round the "Stones of Venice," except as you have shown them. Therefore I wish the more to show you the terrible beauty of one part of my country, the West coast of Clare. It is unlike everything else, a black indented line of cliffs, such a purple when the sea strikes them, and full of caves and chasms, where, when the air is calmest the thunder of the waves is loudest. For always in the stillest summer weather the billows beat that coast. The "ground swell" never rests, and no words can describe the beauty of the ever rising and falling columns of spray, as white and as terrible in their whiteness as the wings of Azrael. There is a ledge

of rocks about a quarter of a mile long, enclosing a quiet bay, and ending in a hill of rock, bare at all tides. That is the place¹ from which to see the fury of the Atlantic, and also its infinite grace. There is no colour anywhere like the hue of the advancing wave before it breaks, and when you see the rainbow-tinted and flying foam caught in the tangles of the red seaweeds, purer and more beautiful than any earth flowers, you *feel* why the Greeks brought their Aphrodite out of the sea-foam. Then when you hear the wild wail of the retreating wave, and look upon the restless anger of the sea, you feel too why Aphrodite was an evil goddess after all, and the enemy of virtue. For the sea rebels constantly against the Divine law, "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further." The sea never ceases its fierce complaining, its impotent yet passionate resistance to that law; the only thing in Nature that would disobey. So in Heaven "there shall be no more sea."

When the baffled tide has drawn back and shows its fierce teeth afar off, there are lakes and pools and tiny basins of liquid chrysolite, ocean gardens, fair and splendid beyond conception: rocks gleaming like marble under the glorifying water. All fringed with purple corallines; crimson and tawny "rhodosperms" hung with mussel-shells, bright blue when the sun reaches them through the water: set round in every crevice and bower with sea blossoms whose every tendril and petal lives. The whole alive with gleaming fish—tiny things, whose colour and movement remind me of panthers.

[¹ Near Kilkee, County Clare.]

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And the bottom of the pool is paved with the purple urchins (*Echinus Levidus*) found nowhere else. A wonder of colour! a thing for Hunt.¹ But these things baffle painting, while they teach colour.

I am sure you would enjoy seeing them. They are a world in themselves.

But I am taking up a great deal of your time in raving about a place which is generally considered particularly ugly! And so it is, as far as the land and the villages are concerned. Still I wish you could see it! It is better than Margate, of which Turner made so much. . . . It is time I should end. . . .

[To CATHERINE, COUNTESS OF DESART, Mrs.
La Touche's Mother]

[Lady Desart (born 1788, died 1875) lived for some years in Dublin after her daughter's marriage, paying frequent visits to Harristown. This is the only letter of Mrs. La Touche's to her mother that exists, the others having been destroyed in the fire at Harristown in 1891.]

HARRISTOWN, July 1860.

The lovely weather promises to continue for your arrival here. I performed a freak last night. I have been longing to watch the awaking of the world on a summer's morning. Not the sunrise, but the dawn and its sights and sounds. So last night when everybody was put by, I went into an empty dismantled room, and there I sat courageously alone

[¹ William Hunt, the artist, of the Old Water Colour Society.]

till 2 A.M., when I stole down, unbarred the door and got out.

There was just the faintest light in the East, gold-tinted and inexpressibly beautiful through the heavy mist. The trees looked like spirits; no colour and only their heads visible above the dew fog. The moon was bright and a few stars were visible in the early twilight: I took a long ramble, and I saw and heard a great deal. You can't conceive how much was shown me! The roses hanging down their wet heads, asleep and quite scentless. The seringa, wide awake, screaming its loud scent for yards round. The birds were making the sweetest sleepy noises. The river talked by night, as by day; and shone like a silver sheet.

By-and-bye the Morning Hymn broke forth, and the East grew radiant. Out from the bushes flew here a blackbird, there a thrush, and the rookery awoke and chattered business in the tree tops.

I did not wait for the Sun. One impression was enough; and I have seen into what I consider the mystery of the Dawn, the birth of the Morning.

I never saw it before. For it is not seeing it to look out of a window. It was delicious. But now I am sleepy. I was down and out again at 7.30: though I only went to bed at 3. What wonderful Exhibitions and Entertainments are provided for us quite gratis, and why do we not all go and see them?

[To MR. RUSKIN. Both being much interested
in Mr. Home's Séances]

KILKEE, 1864.

I am hoping for a letter from you to-morrow telling me about the séance. How beautiful that is about the tree and the birds, and yet, as you say, trivial.¹ But after all, perhaps we err very much in calling one thing more trivial than another. . . . It has often staggered me, as it does you, that weak people, and weak writings, and trifling results, are somehow among the materials of all this. And yet, if all this be true, and if Christianity be also true, are not all these phenomena connected? I mean—does not their very childishness connect them with that which is hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes? With that which professes that we must become “as little children” to receive it?

Talking of birds, a neighbour of mine in Kildare had a pet canary that her children were very fond of. She and the children left home for a few days. They left a very ignorant, stupid, attached, Irish cook (such a bad one! I know, for I have dined there!) in charge of the house, and most especially of the bird.

By some inadvertence she let the bird fly away. She was in the greatest grief: she put seed on the window, she hung out the cage, and charged all the little neighbour boys to look out for a yellow bird. Days passed, I don't know how many. The day came for the return of her mistress and the children.

[¹ This letter of Ruskin's cannot be found.]

Then the woman pictured to herself the children's grief at what she had to tell them, and she cried bitterly, and knelt down and prayed earnestly that the bird might come back.

She rose: and saw it hop in at the window!

The story's not worth much, for all its facts might have occurred without any spiritual influence having worked, but it and *your* story, reminds one of that sparrow which cannot fall to the ground without our Father.

· · · · ·
Tell me more of your "wild girl." Who is she, has she got a name? She seems very conscious of herself and her peculiarities, and evidently goes in for "being a witch." Her composition is curious. "Star crowned with bays!" She can have no imagination, or she could not have seen that curious constellation. It's like the poetry one writes in one's sleep. "Comet tailed with buttercups," "Ocean robed with cobweb." Tell me more about her. But I don't like her.

[*To MISS YOUNG at Caledon.* Then governess
to her two grandchildren]

February 1878.

I don't a bit know what to say about Rose's¹ music. She is exactly what I was at her age (10 years), and I was much more forced and pressed about it than she is, but my misery over it was untold. The only thing that encouraged and helped

[¹ Rose Florence Ward, daughter of Colonel (now General) the Hon. B. M. Ward and Emily La Touche.]

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me was having my pieces very well played to me before I learnt them, and being talked to by a clever master about harmony and composition. I am sure if I had never been taught music, I should now say I had been greatly wronged, and yet it was a waste of time, temper, and brains.

My advice would be, that Rose should be given every opportunity of hearing good music, and should go on giving an hour a day to its study till she is 14, and should then be solemnly given the option of substituting some other art study for it.

An hour a day up to 14, spent in conquering distasteful difficulties, is not worse than a good mental gymnastic to a healthy young brain. But after that age, Art should not be touched with unloving hands, and bad music is of no earthly use or good in the world. Whereas there are many uses for very humble and unskilled drawing, if only it be correct.

HARRISTOWN, *March 1878.*

I've been overwhelmed with business and correspondence owing to our having broken up our establishment before going abroad, and having now to reconstruct it all, which, owing to bad times and diminished rents, has to be all done on quite a different scale. This involves a great deal of thought and trouble, and I have no talent at all for the things I have now to attend to.

You are quite right in what you say about story-books, and the time has come for deeper studies. As Rose likes History she has a whole world of good reading before her. I should like to think she

was cultivating the æsthetic faculty a little. I think the moral and intellectual effect of doing so is always good. If the faculty is strongly present, it needs training and directing. If there is but little of it (there is always some in a young creature) it needs fostering and cultivating. No character can be beautiful, or even as good as it should be, without it. Rose is of an age to appreciate Shakespeare. I hope she reads him.

[*To MISS WARD*]

[The following letter to her granddaughter, Rose (Mrs. John Hotham), is unfortunately the only one of a long educational series which has been preserved. Mrs. La Touche was a very keen educationalist, and most anxious about the training of the two grandchildren, an interest which she kept up to the end of her life, when her great-grandchildren's welfare was an object of much solicitude.]

HARRISTOWN, *March 1878.*

I hope my childie is making good use of her time, and reading sensible books? Now is the time to acquire a real taste for knowledge and an appreciation of good literature. I know some people think all this does not matter for a woman. Well, I have lived a good while, and I am of opinion that self-culture is of the *first* importance to a woman if she is to be useful, good, and happy.

When I say the first importance, I mean, of course, first among earthly means of improvement.

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The Bible teaches us the highest and truest way for all of us to become useful, good, and happy. But we must also use the earthly means, for we have to go through life.

Life in the end of the Victorian age, not life as it was in 1830. We have to be "thoroughly furnished," and our influence and powers for good will be very small if we are ignorant and uncultured. Wherever a woman's lot may be cast, or whatever duties may fall to her share, she will do them better, and be far happier if she has a well-stored mind, a taste for solid (as well as good imaginative) reading, and plenty of culture. It saves her from depression and weariness in a dull life, from frivolity, dissipation, and waste of time in a gay one, and from petty gossip, low interests, and vulgar aims in a contracted sphere.

I happen to know that the best female author of the present day is also the best housekeeper, and as simple and kindly as . . . well, we'll say Mrs. Butt.¹ Never be afraid of being "blue." I am lecturing you now, much as my mother lectured me in 1836. She was in these ideas very much in advance of *her* age. Now it is not so, but I can give you no idea of the comfort, advantage, and relief I have found all through my life from the literary tastes and the culture (not half enough) which I received and took in at your age.

There, now I've done. Try and interest your growing little mind in big, wise, and beautiful things, and all the little daily duties will be done the better and more happily.

[¹ Housekeeper at Harristown.]

I brought home seven birds¹ from London. The horrid grey cat killed those I left here. All my new ones are yellow or variegated. People don't appreciate Cinnamons and lizards as they ought, and I want my birds to sell for the church. These are very deep in colour. One of them has a fine fluffy hat and a shawl to match, another has a shawl and pair of spectacles.

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

HARRISTOWN, *April* 1878.

Yes, I am quite ashamed, and am hanging down my head. I am very very sorry we shot Lord Leitrim.² Sorry, but not at all surprised. It was certain to happen sooner or later.

And I am sorrier still for the two poor boys (who were with him) who had done no harm, and who had parents and families to mourn for them. Lord Leitrim had no one; and was carried to his grave through a crowd of shouting, cursing, and yelling enemies. We knew him very well. I rather liked the brave old tyrant.

He was strictly just, which does not do in Ireland. He was generous, and had spent heaps of money in real improvements—roads, schools, &c. But we don't like roads and schools. The one thing he made the people feel was, that the land was his and not theirs.

Now if we sit down on a stone for an hour, we think that stone is ours, and nobody is to touch it!

[¹ Canaries.]

[² William Sidney, third Earl, murdered April 2, 1878.]

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He made good and severe rules, and enforced them. It was a case of obedience or eviction. But he never ground the people for money, nor received other than very low rents. He *would* have his way. He was essentially a Law-giver and a Law-enforcer, and we hate that. We like to be lawless. Everybody knew that sooner or later he would be shot.

LISDOONVARNA, *June* [1878] (?).

See where I've got to! That must explain why I have not answered your two delicious letters. I am so glad Miss Beever welcomes our Irish Pinguicula. It is most abundant on the bogs of Cork and Kerry. I have seen the banks of bog-pools perfectly glorified with tremulous purple gleams as the sun and wind played among the crowded blossoms that seemed to dance upon a carpet of pale green.

It was a sudden thought our coming here, and it is only for two days. We first went to Galway, and yesterday crossed the bay in a steamer to a place called Ballyvaughan, and drove here ten miles. But, Joan, it's not here I'll take you when you come to Ireland. It's very bleak and bare, and you can't see the sea.

The scenery is all downs and bogs, and a geological formation like long lines of flat tombstones much worn by time, and laid in terraces one above the other. Between, are very deep chinks, where you can have the pleasure (?) of breaking your leg among lovely ferns. The true maiden-hair is said to grow in these chinks, but I've not found it.

Mr. La Touche is cross, and says they might

as well have built a monster hotel on Harristown Common as here. And I can't make him think anything of the three different mineral wells that cure everybody of everything except obstinacy!

He also says the scenery is far more beautiful on Narraghmore Bog.¹ I say I hate "scenery." The fields and hills are not backs of theatres. There is no scenery here, but extraordinary little gullies and dells. And chasms, nice springy bogs, and lots of flowers and ferns. The foxgloves are enormous, and much redder than I ever saw them. The thistles are quite different from Kildare thistles. The flowers are all odd, and some I never saw before, notably a white orchis. It is not the butterfly orchis; it is scentless, and has no creamy greeny tinge about it, and it is snow white. It may be a white variety of the common *Orchis mascula*. Ask Miss Beever.² If you and Arthur would only come it would be too great a joy. We are sure to be back at Harristown, and quite settled the first week in July.

July 1878.

I am nearly driven wild with the Dorcas accounts, and by Mrs. Wakefield's orders they are to be done now. I do hate sums. There is no greater mistake than to call arithmetic an *exact* science. There are Permutations and Aberrations discernible to minds entirely noble like mine; subtle variations which ordinary accountants fail to discover; hidden laws of Number which it requires

[¹ A part of Mr. La Touche's Kildare property.]

[² One of the Ladies of the Thwaite, Coniston.]

a mind like mine to perceive. For instance, if you add a sum from the bottom up, and then again from the top down, the result is always different. Again if you multiply a number by another number before you have had your tea, and then again after, the product will be different. It is also remarkable that the Post-tea product is more likely to agree with other people's calculations than the Pre-tea result.

Try the experiment, and if you do not find it as I say, you are a mere sciolist, a poor mechanical thinker, and not gifted as I am, with subtle perceptions.

Of course I find myself not appreciated as an accountant. Mrs. Wakefield¹ made me give up the book to Rose and her governess (who are here), and was quite satisfied with the work of those inferior intellects.

Rose is such a "sweetness"; so happy always, good and obedient, free from all selfishness and self-consciousness and self-will. She is a great comfort, and very skilful with her hands, diligent and patient. Not imaginative, nor gifted in any way. She has grown tall. People say she will be as big as I am! She is dark, with brown eyes, and a good complexion.

Oh Joan, do you think you and Arthur could come over here? It would be so nice—at least for us—and we could go to Killarney and the West. You could come from Silloth to Dublin. Think of it.

[¹ Mrs. Wakefield was Mrs. La Touche's nearest neighbour, and the founder and treasurer of the Kilcullen Dorcas Society.]

HARRISTOWN, 1878.

Here's the poppy seed for you. You know the wild red poppy is "silk and flame," the Professor¹ says so. I hope next year, he will be reminded of *Lacerta*,² by banners and bonfires greeting his steps. I've been looking out anxiously for the box of plants ever since Miss Beever's letter and yours came. Now I am happy.

Please thank Miss Beever very much for her kindness. Tell her my lower playground is not a safe enough place for such treasures as she sends me.

I do not know any *Convallaria*, except Solomon's Seal and Lily of the Valley. I should feel honoured and for ever grateful if I might be given one plant of *Maranthemum bifolia*. You see you spoil me by sending me more things.

Does Miss Beever live within a walk of you? How delightful to have botanical people within reach. . . .

August 1878.

I am trying to get Mr. La Touche to go to Mentone next winter, where I would find my cousin, Mrs. Bishop, but he is about as easy to transplant as an old tree. I am sorry you have servant-worries. How I wish we could do without servants—except when we can get them nice and human. That sort is almost quite gone out of the world. A few remain, embedded in old houses in a semi-fossil

[¹ Ruskin.]

[² *Lacerta* is the name Professor Ruskin gave Mrs. La Touche. He explains its meaning in *Præterita*.]

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state, like Mrs. Butt¹ here ; but new ones are not to be had for love or money. For money only, I should say. It has become too absurd to suppose nowadays that anything is to be had for love !

My Quin² is going away, and it is such a bore. I am looking for a mistress (erroneously called a " lady's maid "). I want one who will rule me without tyranny, and will let me have a little choice now and then as to the wearing of the clothes she kindly lends me, and who will not take back the loan as soon as the garment has got comfortable and transfer it to her own back ! One who will sometimes go so far as to mend a seam that may have come undone, and not say the dress is quite worn out and can never be put on again.

HARRISTOWN, *November* [1878].

I am quite stupid because it's so cold, and I do hate to see the Dance of Death of the leaves in the north wind. We are not accustomed to north wind here, and we have had a week of it.

However, we really are going to Mentone next month ! It is rather stupid for me here. Everybody has gone mad about hunting, and I've been so busy writing out my Dorcas report. I think I'll make it in rhyme next year, if I'm alive.

I've been seeing such lovely sunsets. I recommend them to you, as more easy to contemplate than sunrises. But perhaps they go on *behind* The Old Man, and don't suit him ?

[¹ She was at Harristown for over fifty years.]

[² Maid.]

One of my neighbours has bothered me by sending me her "Album of Confessions" to write in. Do you know that form of torment? How can one have one's favourite food? It varies with the occasion. I put "hot bread and milk." The other confessions in the book were very edifying. Fox-hunting was generally put down as the favourite occupation, and a promising young Earl had replied to "Your favourite Painters and Composers," "Hate them all." The same nobleman had inscribed as his favourite quality in man "Comon sense," and in woman "Frivollitty." He must have been insufficiently flogged at school. His favourite characters in fiction were disposed of by the reply, "I think them all bosh." I should much enjoy seeing that Earl held under the Liffey for a few seconds.

[The following letters in rhyme, written by Mr. Mitchell of Ballynure, County Wicklow, and Mrs. La Touche, are undated, but may fitly come in here. A clever article had appeared in an English paper accusing Irishmen of the upper classes of devoting themselves too much to hunting and sport generally. This paper Mrs. La Touche sent to her philosopher friend, and the following correspondence ensued :—

[MR. MITCHELL'S *First Letter*]

Apologia pro re senatica.

Your extract, dear Mrs. La Touche, I have read,
Marked, learned, and digested. What is to be said?

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'Tis a fact which creation doth "'tarnally wallop,"
So speaks the American Sen'tor of Trollop,
That a little ill-scented and mischievous vermin
Should be valued as never was sable or ermine.
That, leaving their firesides, in cold and wet
weather
Men should spend at the covert-side long hours
together
In pursuit of an object so worthless and small,
That when they have caught it, 'tis no use at all.
You say that such pastime is only effectual
To degrade from his station the man intellectual.
But hear the *per contra*, and this we must note
for it,
That the foxes, if polled, would undoubtedly vote
for it.
The pith and the essence of this paradox is
That but for fox-hunters there would be no
foxes.
So long as quick eye, ready judgment, and wit
Entitle a man at the council to sit,
Or with wave of the hand and a glance of the
eye,
To send forth his fellows to conquer or die,
So long is it clear to the view the most cursory,
That the chase of the fox is of soldiers the
nursery.
Let this pass. For you see to the subject I'm
warming.
Why attach inconsistency? Is it not charming?
The salt and the savour of life? If you doubt it,
Say what would be man, or more, woman, with-
out it?

Imagine a character, perfectly sensible,
Consistent in all things and ne'er reprehensible,
Equipoised in itself, never loved, never hated.
What a monster, like Frankenstein, you'll have
created!

And now this my rigmarole nearly is done,
But how much is earnest, and how much is fun,
I leave you to decipher; but this be you sure
of it,
Reviling fox-hunting will *not* be the cure of it.

[MRS. LA TOUCHE'S *Reply*]

I

Dear Mr. Mitchell, doubtless you are right ;
Courage and wit and every manly grace
With deepest wisdom, and all arts polite
Are nurtured in that wild and wintry place
The " hunting field " ; all sweetness and all light
Beam forth unclouded from the huntsman's face ;
And sweeter than the music of the spheres
The cry of hounds to philosophic ears.

II

Foxes would vote for hunting if they could.
I've heard that cogent argument before,
They'd be extinct without it. So they would.
But why should we have foxes any more ?
Civilisation is a doubtful good ;
I've often found its works and ways a bore,
But surely cultured people should determine
To rid their land at once of noxious vermin.

III

Our wolves are gone, perhaps we want them back?
 "Child money" tho' might tax the hunt too high.
 Besides the creatures are themselves a pack,
 And might induce the "Field" to turn and fly.
 The little isolated foxes lack
 All means of self-defence, no doubt that's why
 Men find unmixed delight in hunting down
 One frightened flying cur in russet brown.

IV

"Never to blend our pleasures or our pride
 With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels"—
 So Wordsworth wrote: yet 'tis a joy to ride
 After some score of foxhounds at the heels
 Of an affrighted thing that runs to hide
 With terror that to tenderness appeals
 In its own far but well-remembered lair,
 Strong in the faith of safest shelter there.

V

But man with "devil's wit" has "stopped him out."
 He dies dismembered at his stone-bound door.
 How sweet to hear the proud victorious shout
 Of the successful warriors! All is o'er;
 And the brave cavalry of lord and lout
 Follow the sated hounds for one hunt more,
 Till darkness falls upon their well-spent day.
 The nursery of courage, this, you say?

VI

It may be so ; and yet I fondly deem
Man's courage needs no nursing, and his heart
No hard'ning in the petrifying stream
Of tendencies that kill the better part
Of all his being, and exclude each gleam
Of higher light from nature or from art.
Sport is, I think, a most efficient nurse
Of spendthrift-selfishness, our Order's curse.

VII

Reviling will not cure. But I can hear
The distant murmur of a force that will.
The maddened pack of leagured hounds draws near,
While Nero-Nimrod, idly "sporting" still
Too dense to reason, and too dull to fear
In killing time, and foxes, spends his skill.
So let him spend it ; happy while he may,—
He and the "sport" he loves have nearly had
their day.

[The second letter from Mr. Mitchell—who had purchased Mrs. La Touche's ponies and carriage—was the result of his becoming (by accident) possessor of a set of Norwegian harness-bells which had been given to her by another neighbour.]

[*From* MR. MITCHELL OF BALLYNURE
to MRS. LA TOUCHE]

Dear Mrs. La Touche, I've heard of your fix,
From the great Lord of G—town, as X as two sticks,

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So indeed from that instant my purpose was
bent

To make restitution, the bells shall be sent
In better condition than when they were *lent*.
Or, since of conditions we're speaking, I pray
That you come here to luncheon, to take them
away.

Perhaps, tho' that is not my reason for asking,
A gleam of the sunshine in which you were bask-
ing¹

May come to us, with you, a guest from the
clime

Of the cistus and rosemary, myrtle and thyme,
And the pine, with its red bark, deep-furrowed,
which plays a

Great part in the beauty of steep Sant' Agnese.
Oh well I remember the sunlight that falls
On the rocks and the terrace and old castle
walls

Of Monaco's headland, where, braving the breeze,
Geranium and aloe o'erhang the blue seas,
While over the grey stones, time-fretted, in cells
The trailing campanula hangs its mauve bells.
Then, looking to eastward, you see the clouds
lower

In masses accumulate o'er Cæsar's tower,
Which, stately through centuries twenty save
one,
Looked down on each conqueror, Norman and
Hun.

I hear you exclaiming, "Why as I'm alive
The man is still rhyming at 50 and 5.

[¹ Mr. and Mrs. La Touche had just returned from Mentone.]

Will he ne'er learn wisdom?" What's wisdom or
folly

But a name? To exorcise the fiend Melancholy
Is the aim of all wisdom, so let us be jolly.

To return, there's my daughter in deepest despair,
For Punchestown Race she'll have nothing to
wear :

Should you know a dressmaker, who can't make a
stitch ill,

Her name will oblige yours most truly, James
Mitchell.

[MRS. LA TOUCHE'S *Reply*]

My dear Mr. Mitchell, I'm grateful indeed,
To find myself thus, from embarrassment, freed.
"As X as two sticks," you had reason to be,
But in kindness you listened and granted my plea.
So if ever again in the far-distant days

A trap shall be mine, with a neat pair of bays,
Those bells to your honour and glory shall sound
Wherever a wood, or "Borreen"¹ can be found.
Meanwhile, do not hasten the bells to restore.

Till I've something to drive, I can use them no
more.

Sweet peace has descended 'twixt G—town and me,
And all is serene since your note set me free.
Is "rhyming" a sin when one's fifty and five?
If the Ides of December should find me alive
That age will be mine. But I hope and believe
I shall always be ready to give and receive

[¹ Irish for a lane.]

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Any sweetness and light, any folly and fun,
That is stingless and pure. Let us play in the sun
While we may; while we can; and if evening
draws near

Let colour and radiance with sunset appear.
Our playtime should come when our working day
closes,

Our autumn be gay, with renewal of roses.
And those who have ever found music in rhyme
Have a taste and a pleasure that strengthens with
time.

When the weather's more settled, how glad I shall
be

To come over and join you at luncheon or tea.
Name a day that will suit you, a week or two
hence—

And if there's no rain, and the cold's not intense
I'll come, and we'll talk as philosophers may
Of the sweet sunny South, and our clime dull and
grey.

Of the Land of Provence, with its wits and its
flowers;

Of this barren and brainless Bœotia of ours!
And, now, I'll impart some intelligence which'll
Perhaps be of use to your daughter, Miss Mitchell.
On a first floor in Dawson Street, named No. 2,
Miss Clarke has a shrine of pink, purple and
blue,

Silk, satin and velvet, with lace all complete,
To make one quite lovely from bonnet to feet.
Rich mantles, smart jackets; such hats and such
caps

As the famed Queen of Sheba once rivalled, perhaps.

She'll make gowns to fit one; and bonnets to boot;

And provide one with gloves, fan, and stockings to suit.

I also should add, at some far distant day,
She will send in her bill and not press one to pay!

Now, you've had quite enough of this doggerel from me,

I remain yours sincerely, Maria La T.

[*To* MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

[HARRISTOWN], *April* 23, 1879.

Where are you? I am sorry to say that I am here in my proper place, in the path of duty, in that state of life to which, &c., &c. But you do not know the Catechism, do you? I've been too cross to write any letters for about six months. (This statement is only approximately true.)

All the time we were at Mentone it was, to me, an anguish to think I should ever have to leave it, and too horrible to do so when the anemones were all coming out, and the cistus-bushes covered with buds. Then when we really did leave it all, I indulged in prolonged sulks. I've not quite got out of them yet, but a letter from you does not strengthen one in sulkiness, though my circumstances do, certainly, give me a good deal of assistance in that line.

We left Mentone on the 27th February, and flew straight home, as fast as steam and a sense of duty could carry us. The "Master" was up to his

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eyes and ears, and over his brain, in business: having dismissed his agent and steward and several lesser functionaries. Hard times involve us in these reductions. They give us both a great deal to do just at first, but I think things will work very well. My pony-carriage and ponies are sold; we have altogether come down in the world.

This is not one of the things that make me sulky. Quite the reverse. If we could come down so far as to have to end our days in a hut somewhere in Provence I should like it still better. . . .

To-day and yesterday are the Punchestown days. All the "County" is concentrated in one spot, which causes total solitude to reign everywhere else. My son¹ won an important steeplechase the other day, riding his own horse.

Our two old dogs, Prinnie and Billy, died while we were away, and I am finding it easier to put up with their loss than it was to put up with their barking. We have no dogs but Victor now, which is worse than having no friends, or, rather, it is the same thing in a worse form.

We are having dreadful weather; nothing could possibly grow. Quantities of the hardiest things have been killed outright, and a good many of the nice things you and Miss Beever sent me are dead. I am busy gardening, and the Punchestown days are delightful for that purpose, as one may wear one's very worst clothes and have earth all over one's hands, and tools sticking out of one's pockets, with a peaceful certainty that no visitors will come!

[¹ Mr. Percy La Touche, now of Harristown.]

HARRISTOWN, *April 1879.*

No, we are hardly "on fire" with primroses here yet. And it is abominably cold. Any flowers that have appeared at all either have no legs or else won't stand. Even the Polyanthus blossoms squat down among their leaves and seem to be watching with round frightened eyes for a break in the clouds. There's no rain, no sun. The earth is all caked and dusty. April has declined to be one of the months this year, and has made an arrangement with March to "take her duty," for which he is quite incompetent; so when May comes she won't bring any flowers, knowing there's no accommodation for them.

No, it is not at all delicious here. There's such a howling wind, and last year's dead leaves are trying to jump on to the trees again, and knocking on the window on purpose to aggravate me.

SONNET

Written April 1879.

Her gracious footsteps, that we love to trace
By light of springing flowers are set in snow,
And all the cruel winds of Winter blow
Against her, till the childhood of her face
Grows wan and sad, because her playing place
Is not made lovely with the tender glow
Of primrose stars. Nor can her grasses grow,
Nor her bright creatures break from Death's embrace.
Poor thwarted April! Not a ray for her
Pierces the veil of snow-cloud, dense and grey.
She cannot feel how all things strive and stir,
With pain of hopeful life, and stern delay:
Although for us God's vernal messenger
She brings Eternal Hope with Easter Day.

June 1879.

I can't thank you and Miss Beever enough for all the lovely plants.

You know I have a "safe" and "unsafe" playground, and all your things are for the former. I've only put wild anemones and yellow poppies into the latter, and ferns from about here. I could not endanger the oak-ferns, or the precious sedums. The unsafe playground is much the prettiest, as it is close to the river; and there is a clear well, and a stone arch, all shaded with trees. There are also stone steps and nice crevices for ferns. But there is no depth of soil; and about once in three years there is a flood. The river rises, and sweeps away everything that is not rooted deep among the stones.

The "safe" playground is inside the walled garden. The great objection to it is that the gardener plays there as well as me! Gardeners are regular Kill-joys.

It is such a comfort to know that the yellow poppy is a perennial. I never trust to things sowing themselves here, we so often have fits of cold wet weather, just when the seeds are ripening.

We are still having bothers about servants: and oh, I am so afraid of new ones. I cannot bear new servants—especially footmen. But other people do not see it. There is a gentleman in that profession coming to-day. I hate the thought of him. And there is a Butler coming next week, and a second Footman on the 20th. We hardly recover one shock before we get another. We are also seeking a cook, and have not found one yet. The good



THE ROCK ARCH AT HARRISTOWN

ones won't come to Ireland. And the "Master"¹ does not agree with me in preferring bad ones.

Do you remember our Rector at Carnalway, Mr. Hare?² He is now Dean of Ossory, and lives in a nice old Deanery house in my native town of Kilkenny. I've been staying with him and his wife, and while there I went to look at Desart Court, my old home. It was the very strangest sensation, like a dream.

You know it was the woods and shrubberies of this place that taught me in my solitary childhood to care for Nature,—as I do, with a love that goes on growing till it has left little room for anything else. Well, I can't tell you how strange it felt to be there again. All the time between now and my 12th year seemed blotted out, and everything, as well as myself, was entirely changed, and totally unchanged at the same time. (In Ireland this is quite possible.) The dear old place had gone to ruin as far as its lawns and walks were concerned. My nephew³ is never there now. The hand of man had not touched them for years.

All the familiar walks were obliterated, the stones of the terrace and balustrades were lifted out of their places by seedling trees. The greenhouse was a tangle of passion flowers within, and ivy and honeysuckles from without. Flowering shrubs trailed and twisted and caught at one another across what used to be trim avenues. The

[¹ Mr. La Touche.]

[² The Rev. Thomas Hare died 1903—for many years Rector of Carnalway, and afterwards Dean of Ossory.]

[³ Fourth Earl of Desart.]

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old lawns were waving meadows, in which there was less grass than tall hyacinths, purple orchises, and white columbines, all nodding and dancing with a perfect revel of joy that Nature had at last taken the old place to her hand, and man had abandoned it. Rabbits and hares scuttled about and sat up and stared at me.

The place was alive with birds. It was a poem. There was something very sad about it from the human side. But yet I never saw the place look so beautiful, or so stately and calm. It has haunted me ever since, and I am longing to go back again.¹

MOURNE HOTEL, ROSTREVOR, 10th April 1880.

We left Kildare simmering and fermenting in the mingled excitements of the election and Punchestown. The people of Kildare would not hear of being represented by any kind of gentleman (we have many kinds in Ireland), and were determined to have two "Home Ruiners." And they have got them. I am afraid in that Bœotia no gentleman has time for attending to such things as making laws for his country. They seem all running with impatience the race that is not set before them; and few of them consider anything worth living for that has not to do with horses.

I am so glad that Lily's canary² is a comfort. I am now engaged in the "manufacture" of canaries

[¹ She never did. Desert Court is now in the possession of her nephew, the fifth Earl, and is one of the beautiful places in Kilkenny.]

[² For many years Mrs. La Touche kept canaries, a pastime that was shared by her granddaughter, Rose. On more than one occasion a canary went to Brantwood for the children there.]

at Harristown. I left Crocus and Celandine anxiously watching three eggs, Poppy and Pansy rather coolly looking after three others, Dandelion and Daisy just finishing the cotton wool lining of their nest; and Primrose in maiden meditation in a cage by herself, scolding all the others through the wires, as meditative maidens are apt to do.

This is a lovely spot and very comfortable, though our abode bears the melancholy name of the "Mourne Hotel."

HARRISTOWN, *July 5th*, 1880.

I am just going out to get some of my odd fox-gloves, and also some bits of begonia for you to show St. C.¹ I told him of the curious rule I found out concerning the begonia flowers. . . .

Now I've packed my flowers. The woolly fox-glove is a person of such absolute rectitude that I thought he would rather be cut in two than bent. The spike I send has only one white tip to each flower, but in some spikes all the flowers have two tips, in some they vary between two and one, and I have one spike in which there are three and four lipped flowers. My best plant stands 3 feet 5 inches high, and the blossoming part is 1 foot 5 inches long, while the circumference of the blossoms is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

These, and the meek, pale, little smooth-faced sort, of which I also send a specimen, came up from the same packet of seed labelled "*Digitalis Lutea*." They might be called the Jacob and Esau foxglove!

[¹ Professor Ruskin.]

I send you too some begonia blossoms and some "Lady's bedstraw," which I did not see at Brantwood. If it does not grow there shall I send some plants for you and Miss Beever? It is perennial, and makes a pretty golden mist on the top of walls and banks.

Do ask the Professor why the middle begonia blossoms must always have one petal less and no back-bones. . . .

Did you notice the advertisement of the Hygea Boots, illustrated by portraits of a laced and a buttoned boot looking at one another? Well, those boots are simply the comfort of my life. I possess two pairs and they take me out walking, and when I am near mountains they carry me all over with very little effort of my own. Do recommend them to any of your friends who are much given to walking. Mine are a perfect fit, and I only sent an old pair of ordinary boots as a pattern. I call them miraculous boots. . . .

Please give my love to Miss Beever, and tell her I am really grateful for the Fritillary roots and seed. I only hope they will do well here: all her other valued gifts, however, are prospering.

Yesterday we had a sort of waterspout while we were at church. It got quite dark during the sermon, with a darkening not produced by the preacher, and presently there seemed to be several mitrailleuses fired at the walls and roof. When the "service" ended nothing could be seen but a dense mass of falling water. Some of the faithful dived home through it; arriving not only soaked, but battered. I waited—as did other members of the

congregation—till a kind neighbour sent me home in her carriage. . . .

Do tell me more about the *pinguicula*. Is it possible that it was the Irish one (*grandiflora*) that was growing so thickly? If so, I want very much to know whether it continues to be *grandiflora*, the Spanish form of the plant; or is reverting to the common *pinguicula*? Tell me.

I am every day more and more interested in that sort of people, and less in the human sort, unless they are very old friends. I hate new ones. You can't think what a joy the things you and that delightful Miss Beever sent me a year ago have been to me ever since.

The yellow poppies have quite established themselves, and colonised all over the place. The sedums and saxifrages have all thriven and spread; but the most wonderful thing of all is the orange hawkweed "*Grim the Collier*." The one tiny plant you gave me some years ago is now a great tuft, and I counted fifty heads of blossom on it. The only thing that has not done well was the interesting *Convallaria*. It sent up four leaves to show it is alive, and that is all it did.

August 1880.

I've been such a long time without writing, you must forgive me. I've been so cross and gloomy, because of the rain and the Land League, that I could not have written a nice letter. Now we've had three fine days.

I have not much to tell you, but I've found out the mystery of the *Begonia* flowers. They are

husbands and wives! The person in the middle with only four petals and no backbone is Begonius. And the two side ones who look so very superior, with five petals and three backbones each, and little corkscrew eyes, are Begonias. And the backbones are not calices but "treasuries." I've been working a great deal in my playground, weeding—but Lacerta's weeding is peculiar—all my things would be called weeds by gardeners. I pull up the thing I don't care for, and leave those I like, and I throw discarded plants into the river, which conveys them (I always hope) to some future state, where they will root or seed themselves, and be happy.

Rose and Ernest¹ and Miss Young are here. The two very much grown. Ernest all legs and arms. He has a most kindly and gentle disposition, and naturally courteous manners, and that's something. He is also very handsome, and that is something else! Rose, too, is a very nice girl and "very good at her needle." Neither of the children are a bit like any of us. So much the better for them, perhaps.

I tell them no end of tales of a grandmother. To which they listen eagerly. Generally about Brantwood, and the four good children there.

[Autumn 1880 (?)]

Your letter was very reviving, for I had got grumpy and cross. The first faintest menace of Autumn in the air always knocks me over. Of

[¹ The two grandchildren.]

course I get up again. There's burnt sienna in the trees, and I do not like to see it. The great leaves of the butter-bur¹ look at themselves in the river as if they did not like seeing their wrinkles. The brackens brighten in dying, but they crinkle and turn grey (just like me, but I am not the least bit grey inside).

At the same time it is no use expecting me to write books, or do anything. The best part of my brain is completely rubbed off. Heaven knows it suffered friction enough for many years to rub the whole of it away. I am nothing but a faun, and have no "powers" at all—except powers of reception (an old jug without a handle and with a cracked spout could say as much)!

I miss the "Sweetnesses"² dreadfully. They left us last week. They are the very goodest children. Certainly rigid military discipline has answered well with them. I never saw two little people so absolutely trustworthy: their obedience is perfect; and it seems to be their pleasure to do exactly as they are told, and even more exactly if nobody is by.

I am again looking for a maid. I want a nice kindly fellow creature, who will not rule me with a rod of iron, but who will make my clothes very beautifully, and who can pack and travel on the Continent without my having to look after her! I'll give her good wages, but I can't have her claiming my old clothes just when they are comfortable!

[¹ *Petasites vulgaris*.]

[² Professor Ruskin's name for the grandchildren.]

[*From* PROFESSOR RUSKIN]BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
3rd Aug. 1881.

MY DEAR LACY,—What a beautifully-written lava-flow of a letter. It's like a lithographed edition of the fleshy tables of the heart. Do you always growl and wowl as straight as that, or is it all written clear for me to read? When I have growling to do or to can't help I write like that

- when I have growling to do
or to can't help I write
like that.


and get blacker and blacker
all down the page - if it's
a private letter

—and get blacker and blacker all down the page
—if it's a private letter. Public growling one
oils one's whiskers for, and stands on one leg,
with the other disposed of, in some stork or
flamingo-like manner.

By the way, Lacy—did you ever see the crested
stork at the Zoo when anybody paid him a visit?
I don't really mean to say anything nasty—but

he *did* just now come into my head, and you should see him if you haven't—only let it be somebody else who's visiting him!

My head's so full of that fluffy foxglove, I can't tell you about anything else—and don't want to particularly (of course *you'll* say that, if I don't). I've never seen it before; and it is not in Sowerby—and it is also very clearly a *link* between the foxgloves, mulleins, and I believe henbanes; but there may be some touch of ophryd in it. Any way it is one of the links, which are always forms of inferiority, and you mustn't call it "*digitalis Mariana*," nor be cross if I call it something of my nether kingdom.

I was writing to Knowles yesterday about some more fiction he wants; and told him I should rather like to say a little more, soon, because now that George Eliot was in heaven, I could write her epitaph without any chance of meeting her afterwards.

I don't mean to tell anybody else but you—unless *he* does.

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

HOTEL DES ILES BRITANNIQUES, MENTONE,
Jan. 14th, 1882.

It is actually more than a month ago since we had tea together, and I've never written to you. I am calling myself all sorts of names for behaving so badly. I seem to be all legs and no brains. We take such very long walks and steep climbs day after day, I feel as if I was turning into a donkey. For

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I live on the donkey's paths, and follow in their steps, and am acquiring their patience and their order of intellect.

Besides we have both had rather bad colds, which makes one still more stupid. It's only because I want to know how St. C.¹ is, and how you all are, and what is going on, that I find wits enough to write now. It's to bring forth a letter from you!

How I wish you were here! This place is delicious, and its greatest charm is that there is not one single person here whom we know! By great exertion and diplomacy I have succeeded in *not* getting upon visiting terms with any mortal in this great barrack of a hotel, altho' we talk as agreeably as we can to the people beside us at *table d'hôte*. We never sit in the salon, and we don't go down to luncheon. You know Irish people don't want luncheon. I generally have two biscuits in one pocket, and an apple in the other up to two o'clock. After that they are further in, and they can be eaten lying down in a thicket of myrtle and rosemary, pretending one is a lizard and not a Christian. The anemones and violets, bees and butterflies are out, and there has been no touch of winter here.

If only the postman would make a nice selection in delivering one's letters, and keep all the bothering ones to light his pipe we should be much happier, or at least I should. But in that case I am afraid Mr. La Touche would go flying home. We hear many of our neighbours have left Bœotia (Kildare). It appears that the "people" have taken to hunting on their own account, each with his own dog,

[¹ The name Mr. Ruskin was always known by.]

or if he has none, with his own stick and a pocketful of stones. They assemble in yelling hordes, and kill every animal they can find. There will soon be no wild beast smaller than an Irishman, or larger than a field-mouse, left in Ireland. This "knews" comes to us from Mrs. Butt.¹ That is her way of spelling the word, obviously right, but my household has its own orthography. The housemaid wrote and told me that Mrs. Butt had the rheumatism in her "neigh!"

[*To Miss Young*]

HOTEL DES ILES BRITANNIQUE, MENTONE, FRANCE,
Jan. 18th, 1882.

We are now getting on well here. This is a much finer and warmer season than that of 1878-79 when we were here before. We have had unchanging sunshine for five whole weeks. The wild-flowers are all coming on; violets and anemones are arriving in troops, and here and there a superior cistus, white, pink, or large yellow. Different kinds of cistus cover the mountain side here, as heather and ling do in Scotland. There is ling here too, and thickets of Mediterranean heath, taller than I am in places, all coming into bloom; also rosemary, myrtle, junipers, and a great many shrubs I can't name. And what isn't in flower is in berry. Of ferns there are a few: the maiden-hair is the most abundant, also Gramites Ceterach, and other wall-ferns.

[¹ Housekeeper at Harristown.]

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Every valley, ridge, and rock has its own vegetation, and differs from the rest. There is a region of purple anemones, and a region of scarlet ones, double and single.

We take tremendous walks, and if I am not thin I ought to be. The paths are exceedingly steep and rough, but they are paths of pleasure, all the same.

The Master has an unhealthy craving for Monte Carlo, where Satan's seat is, and we sometimes go there and find ourselves in a Paradise of serpents. It (including Monaco) is the loveliest spot in the whole Riviera, but the rampant wickedness is appalling to those who see it. Some people don't, and think the "streeling" groups of smart people, and faces, and parasols, make it like a Watteau picture. To me it is like a nightmare or a bad dream; and the wonderful beauty, lavish flowers, and sunlight suggest evil enchantments.

The orchestral concerts are supposed to be the best in the world, and go on every afternoon in the theatre, which is free to all. And one sits in a luxurious armchair of red velvet and gold as long as one likes to listen. Or one may sit in an equally luxurious reading-room, with all possible newspapers and latest telegraphic news posted up. Or walk into the Salle de Jeu, and be ruined in 5 minutes.

Yesterday we went to see the Palace and gardens at Monaco,—the station beyond Monte Carlo, where I was determined we should *not* go. We were quite enchanted with the Monaco gardens. Imagine a great rock rising out of the sea, shaped like the

Castle rock at Edinburgh, but higher. This is covered with wonderful gardens, and a whole shrubbery of self-sown scarlet and pink geraniums, quite as large as laurels anywhere else. The wild parts of the rock were one mass of anemones, wild campanulas of different kinds, and seedling geraniums; the ivy-geranium trailing everywhere like a weed, self-sown.

Well, though we had return tickets, and the heat was quite blazing, nothing would satisfy Mr. La Touche but that we should walk into Monte Carlo and stand in sinners' ways. So we did, and wandered among the scum of society, sitting in the gardens beside all sorts of people, for nearly an hour, till the train came to our release.

Next week we hope to go for a few days to a very different place—Alassio. This letter is like a bit of Murray's Guide.

HOTEL DES ILES BRITANNIQUES, MENTONE,
February 1882.

Your letters and enclosures were very welcome, and deserve an interesting reply, which they won't get. A Sabbath-stupidity reigns in my brain; and on the other days I walk so much, and look about me so much, that when I come in I seem to be all impressions, and no ideas.

We are still having cloudless weather, and not one drop of rain this year; but last week we had two disagreeable days—for a wonder; cold wind and clouds of dust making us long for rain. However, the cloudless calm has returned. It feels quite

strange to be cold. And the sea was wonderful during the gale—such a peacock blue and dazzling white spray.

We liked Alassio very much. It is a small, sleepy, solemn, old Italian town; full of churches, and monks, and colleges, no resources of civilisation—except the comfortable hotel. It is close to Albenga, which ought to be on the map.

We did much walking there, but did not find as many flowers, or as rich vegetation as here. The few we did find were very different—a very pretty single *pink* pink, and another wild *Dianthus*, which certainly is the original Sweet William (no relation to W. E. G.¹). Also quantities of a large periwinkle, a lovely white, just tinged with blue; and a very superior colt's foot, with clusters of mauve flowers, all peppered with black anthers, the leaves dark green, with purple spots; a very effective plant.

Unfortunately anemones are fashionable; and are found in shops only. But there are plenty of unfashionable little flowers most interesting to me; and the brushwood and tangle is full of delights, and also full of thorns.

I've got seven pairs of strong boots and shoes here, and I have nearly worn them all out. The paths are rough and hard in this dry weather. Our good time is nearly over, we can't stay many more weeks. There are some necessary repairs going on at Harristown, and many expenses. And one must not burn the candle at both ends.

One misses one's dog out here; but I never

[¹ Mr. Gladstone.]

would bring Victor.¹ I've not seen any dog even faintly resembling him, though this is a doggy place. Poodles and Maltese terriers abound, and there are "boule dogues" beribboned and belled.

Some happy peasants in one of the valleys have such a red Tom Cat. But I must not covet my neighbour's Pussie. He is lovely! Not fluffy, but sleek like a chestnut horse, striped and barred, golden and red, like a winter's sunrise, emerald eyes, long white boots on his hind feet, and small white shoes on his front ones. He never will be mine.

Our days pass in a very simple way. We breakfast in our own sitting-room; take our luncheon out with us, and eat it among the olives, or buried among the Mediterranean heath and myrtle. It consists of apples, oranges, and biscuits.

I go foraging into the town with a basket two or three days a week. The "Master" is always saying, like Jacob of old, "Go again, buy us a little food." We dine at *table d'hôte*, and then at once come back to our own room.

[To PROFESSOR RUSKIN]

HARRISTOWN, *July 1st, 1882.*

I have just received a lovely and mystic Thing, in a registered letter directed by you. It has a small summer cloud in its inside, and it has eight outsides, regularity without symmetry, and lustre

[¹ A fox terrier Mrs. La Touche had for many years.]

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without glitter. I am going to get a lens and look at it till it tells me more ; but meanwhile won't you tell me something about it. Is it a Diamond? . . . Is it for me to look at and—and send back? Or is it that you recognise me as an other than Lacertine Reptile,¹ and send me a precious jewel to wear in my head? Send me a little word, and think of me always as your affectionate and grateful

LACERTA.

[On this letter in Professor Ruskin's handwriting is the following: "I sent her rather a pretty diamond, and have answered she's to keep it. She's very like J., so very pleased with so little."]

[*From* PROFESSOR RUSKIN.]

HERNE HILL, S.E., 4th July, '82.

Yes, that's a diamond, and if it amuses you, you're to keep it. They're not unlucky like opals, and they really are the most wonderful thing in the creation—not alive. That one is very clear and good and beautiful in its crystalline surfaces, but, as you see, flawed internally, else it would have been cut by the jewellers at once, and never found its way to you or me. Of the perfect *outside* form of the diamond you can scarcely see a better type.

I thought it so pretty of you to be interested in these things at all, but in some ways they are nicer than flowers or canaries, being found always where one leaves them.

[¹ His name for Mrs. La Touche was Lacerta.]

I am writing a grammar of crystallography, which you will find quite easy, and I can find you a pretty crystal now and then, if you will like them. I am staying in town, chiefly to work at British Museum and the other, partly for what gaieties I'm up to. There are people who like to have me, and I am really working at music somewhat seriously (necessary for "Our Fathers Have Told Us"), and am hearing, too, some good music.

LUCCA, 22nd October, 1882.

. . . I wish you were here to see the cyclamens! Some of the hillsides are a serene succession of grass terraces, sustained by mossy walls; and wherever the terrace becomes a bank, under the walls, the cyclamens cluster in violet clouds, and scatter away in hooded companies, like nuns driven out of their convent walls. I never saw such lovely things, first almost rose colour, then fading into white.

And there's a little crimson pink, too, on the higher mountain ground (which is all covered with the grey-blue peppermint), and a small bindweed nearly as pink as the pinks themselves, low on the ground, in single flowers.

I get a good deal of walking here on the marble hills, and am doing some good drawing. . . .

I don't see why, because I called you a *Première Ingénue*, you should have been frightened at me; I think it's a very pretty and nice thing to be. It was much ruder of you to say you had been disappointed in every human thing you had to do with, when I've turned out so nicely after all! . . .

PISA, 2nd Nov., '82.

I can't imagine what address I gave you that wasn't in the world, but you know one never can see anything in maps now but the railways. You will be safe after this, with a pretty romantic one—Hotel de L'Abbaye, Talloires, Lac d'Annecy, Savoie. Letters have come there from Harristown before now.

I bade farewell to Italy for this year virtually yesterday, in the loveliest day of all the year, from dawn to sunset on the Carrara mountains, and twilight by the Baptistery, with numberless festive All Saints people dissolving round it to their homes.

But Pisa absolutely needs solitude for her beauty; she is then not sad but wonderful, and full of calm power. A crowd is discordant to her.

Do you recollect the field before the Cathedral? It was all studded blue last month with a small vervain, that sparkled like a sprinkle of turquoise instead of dew, till one could scarcely see the grass for the gleaming of it.

It is to be in *Proserpina* "Verbena Pisana." Mind that.

It will be quite worth while, if those policemen¹ will let you, to come to Lucca next year to see those cyclamens.

They are the common mountain flower which grows in autumn everywhere in nooks of limestone,

[¹ There were bad times in Ireland just then, and Mr. La Touche was under police protection.]

but at Lucca it has fine marble for the nooks, and these terraces of turf, as I said, for recreation : truly it is a new vision of flower-life to see it clustering and scattering along them, in that purity of lilac light.

The colchicum is very like it in distant effect on fields, but has a way of dog's-earing itself and dropping its petals in a tired way, while the cyclamen will fade white, without looking tired, and then its tidyness and trimness, and "toiletteness" and shyness, are so precious, when it's all itself.

Then it's worth while to see the olives in full fruit. There is the same romance and marvel in them as in the vine, and besides a Puritan severity with their quaker-dim leaf and dark berry, which nobody gets drunk with, nor takes sixteen cups of, like coffee (all the same, I could not get along myself, without my coffee). I am simply never tired of looking at the olives, the shoots of leaf against the sky, and the twining of trunk that is the only thing in all the world that can be eccentric and graceful at the same instant, and fantastically serene.

BRANTWOOD, 22nd June, '83.

I got home yesterday, cheered in dark weather by your delicious letter about the little "bottles," only I don't like being likened to a big Octopus. . . . It's a great come down from Archegosaurus.¹ I've never changed you into a centipede! So I

[¹ One of the names given to Ruskin by Mrs. La Touche's children.]

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won't be an Octopus, but I want another letter directly about that potato lily, and—anything.

I am not sure about the bee-cell business; we are not bees, and we have men's and women's eyes, and not round lenses, and I think we ought to see far away, and to pray for *all* that are desolate and oppressed, and much more feed them and fight for them. I've been to Hereford and Llangollen, and am home at last, with Joan and her children. I want to get some more *Proserpina* done. I've five dozen letters in my desk, shrieking to be answered, but I don't mind them, and write to you instead! . . . I owe you infinite letters, for one of yours is worth an infinity of mine, but I think you ought to get into the habit of writing whatever you would like to say to me, knowing that I listen and am grateful, even when utterly silent. . . . Perhaps I may see you at Brantwood this year, and if I cannot, still you will care to know what I am doing, and be perhaps—I do hope—a little proud of me, and help me about birds and flowers. I shall expect you always to write half the chapters! We may have some autumn sunshine yet.

ST. C.

[To PROFESSOR RUSKIN]

1883.

Oh no, I never meant that you were an Octopus, nor anything like one. A thing with long arms stuck over with *suckers* is the very reverse of a thing with long filaments of perception stretching miles through space. No, we're not bees, but still we have our limits. We cannot care as much for

the distant desolate and oppressed as for the near ones, any more than a stone dropped into the sea can make as deep a ripple ring 100 feet off, as 1 foot off. If you were in trouble, and were to do such a thing as ask a nice Saint to pray for you, you wouldn't like such a reply as "Oh yes, I always pray for all sorts and conditions of men, and that includes professors."

Your letter has remained unanswered these two days because I am very stupid. I have had one of my best-improved headaches, when the light *cuts* like a knife.

I hope you will go on with your lovely *Proserpina*. The potato lily is flowering at last; one of its many tunnelling and mining roots has thrown up a green sprout (as they all do), and being moved from my "playground" to the garden has felt its responsibility, and the unfitness of going on playing at being a potato, and has hung out its white bells—but in a stingy and sulky manner. The other sprouts are coming up, some feet apart, but won't flower.

Such a lovely group of my tall white foxgloves has sprung up in the thickest and darkest and weediest tangle of the shrubbery, where I never saw them before. We had some, last year, in another place, and I measured one spike. It was 8 feet 6 inches! The white foxglove likes this place much better than the purple. Why are the white varieties of everything earlier than the coloured? I had always observed this, and then found it noticed in a delightful book, "Colin Clout's Calendar," by Grant Allen.

[*To* MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

HARRISTOWN. [No date, probably about 1883.]

No, I've not been at all "sweet"; quite the reverse, for I've been very cross indeed. It is cold and dismal here, and driving—even if there was anywhere to drive to—a penance. "Grampus"¹ never took the least notice of the dozens of long letters I wrote to her. She reduces her life to powder, with all the fussy, but very excellent things she does, and the crowds of people she sees, so a poor creature that can only be noticed through the post, isn't noticed at all, and living in a demoralised country one grows savage and one bites. You wrote me a most amusing letter about Mr. Gladstone. His poor daughter² must have collapsed on getting the Professor's³ letter. I wrote a letter to Arthur,⁴ all about birds, and asked him to send it on to you as I did not know where you were. I hope Lily's⁵ hair won't be turned grey, and her young spirits crushed, by the anxieties inseparable from canary families. You know I did not mean to bring this tribulation into your house. I only meant one bird for her, and the other was from Bedgar⁶ to Martha, and we thought they were two cocks, and would sing! I often think of my granddaughter Rose who (when she was younger than Lily is now) was going to play tennis, and

[¹ The pet name the La Touche family had for Mrs. Bishop.][² Mrs. Drew.][³ Ruskin.][⁴ Mr. A. Severn.][⁵ Miss Severn.][⁶ Mrs. La Touche's maid.]

have a happy day with some children, and was heard by her father to give a deep sigh and murmur, "This is a frightfully anxious day." All because her canary had produced an egg that morning!

Well, this is a "frightfully anxious time" for us over here. The National League is the only Government, and it rules with a rod of iron. The tenants don't hesitate to complain bitterly of the thralldom they are under, but they have an idea that if they obey its "discipline" implicitly, they will somehow or other get the land for nothing, and that somehow the landlords will be compensated, and all will be peace. That's the mood of the people about here, but in the West their minds are more deeply poisoned, and they boycott, threaten, and murder, and seem turned into fiends. My cousin's bailiff (in Galway), who was lately shot, had never done anything harsh or cruel, and they laughed and jeered at his widow crying over his dead body; they prevented his being buried in consecrated ground. No one would make or sell a coffin, or lend a spade. The police had to do all, and one of his employees gave him a resting place, and *protects it*.

June 1883.

The middle or end of August is the very best time you could come to us,¹ and generally the best weather too, in this moist country. Of course we shall be delighted to receive Mr. and Mrs.

[¹ Mr. and Mrs. Severn were coming to Ireland.]

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Marshall, and I will write to Mrs. M. when the time is nearer.

Only look here, my Joan, I want you to understand ; you know we are *ECCENTRIC*, the Master and I, in quite different ways—which, however, lead to the same result. We have got ourselves entirely out of society here. We have now no young people to think of, so we consider we may be unsociable. I think it must be ten years since I visited a single soul at the Curragh camp. I do not know a creature there now, so I can't go and have luncheon in a nice hut, as I should like to be able to do when Mrs. Marshall¹ is here.

We have drifted into such hermit ways that I think this house must be as agreeable to pay a little visit in, as a Scotch manse in the time of John Knox!

We will go to the West after you've been here. Meanwhile, I am trying to persuade Mr. La Touche that a little holiday between hay and harvest would be good for him, with some nice long mountain walks. And I want him to come with me to that nice hotel close to Furness Abbey ; and then to Mrs. Sly's, at the Waterhead, for a week. I think the air and the walks and the comfortableness would do him much good. He is subject to rather bad headaches, and I want much to show him the beauties of the Lakes.

[¹ Mrs. Victor Marshall was the daughter of Sir Alexander Gordon, long in command at the Curragh.]

[*To PROFESSOR RUSKIN*]

HARRISTOWN, *July 1883.*

Yes, I am coming. Please give Joan my love and thank her for the railway-books, which I find very hard reading.

The "Master" will forget me for a week, but he can't possibly forget his hay. Of course he's selfish, and the Lancashire hay is not the same to him as his own Irish hay. He wants to see it "saved"; and to command the Salvation Army that does it. He also wants to see if there will be enough for all the beasts, and any over to sell.

I don't care, and I like your hay best, because there are all sorts of geraniums in it.

The garden is all wet and dismal, but there's a bed of poppies full of hard little green hanging heads, waiting for the sun to shine to do wonders.

I've found a field of white champions. They are quite sweet at night, but scentless in daylight. Only for the new railway I should not have known we had white champions here. I also discovered in a thicket of blackthorns a bank carpeted with golden saxifrage. It is just like fine old faded embroidery, of green and yellow silk, and artful stitchery. There is a white foxglove here with five spikes, one taller than me.

We are to be at Chester on Wednesday.—I am always your

LACERTA.

[*To Miss YOUNG, then in Kildare*]

CONISTON (PARADISE),
[*July 1883*].

We were lucky yesterday in being able to leave Chester by an early train, and get a nice long walk here before dinner. I persuaded my beloved dentist to see me for the last time on Monday evening, instead of yesterday morning. He has done wonders! I don't know myself. And he gave me at parting the loveliest bouquet; not a made up wired one, but quantities of heavenly roses, red and white, leafy and long-stalked, worthy of St. Dorothea, and heaps of beautiful small, pure white gladiolus, with lots of double geraniums, maiden-hair and other ferns.

We had a very pleasant journey from Chester; but I may say we walked here, for no sooner had we sat down in a train than we had to get out of it, and we had to wait walking up and down platforms all over England.

We had no luncheon, which made tea at the Waterhead Hotel peculiarly blissful. Of course we found a note of most cordial welcome from Brantwood, and they said they would come and see us at 3 to-day, but Mr. La Touche wants to see the Professor first in his own house. So we are going to walk over there, and I hope they will take us back in their boat. It is rather wild weather for July, squally and showery.

I am glad you are going away soon. We might have a couple of days in Dublin together. This

would save me a journey later, if you could extract from the Rector the names of the children entitled to prizes, first and second in each class, appending to each name the prize most desired; such as writing-desk, work-box, Church-service, Bibles, Hymn-book, knife, story-book, or anything else, short of a French novel or a flounce of Venice Point!

You are very good to Victor. I am sure he wants society, but why does he bark at it when he has it? I bark at it, but mine is a consistent walk, for I am never so happy as when I am well out of it. I am now getting on delightfully and laying in a stock of plain living and high thinking. If such things can be stored!

I must end now, and get ready for our walk to Brantwood. We have already had a long walk this morning. The "Master" is quite enchanted with this place, and everything else—especially a perfectly faultless Sis-Cow we met in a field. All her glories and perfections were explained to me, in a sort of Litany of the Durham Shorthorn—and she was valued on the spot at £35.

CONISTON, *July 20, 1883.*

So Bœotia has broken out in Garden Parties! I am not sorry to be away. Here it is all garden and no party.

We are having a heavenly time, and the "Master" is more delighted with this place, and with the joys of Brantwood, and the enthusiastic welcome they gave him, than he has been

for a long time with anything. The day we arrived we had a delicious long walk. The next day in the morning another, and then in the afternoon a reception worthy of the Prodigal Son.

The Professor was delightful, carried off the "Master" and showed him enchanting things, all Francesca's¹ wonderful drawings, and his garden and his wood, his building and draining, &c. &c., while Joan showed me the children, and the new rooms, &c.

No one would say the Professor was unpractical who saw how ingeniously he has built the addition to the house. He gained a great deal by arching over all the space between the back of the house and a great rock, and building on it, thus turning the road (to the stable yard) into a short tunnel. . . . The kindliness of these lake-dwellers is striking, and they have no contempt for anybody, and no nasty prejudices.

Our servants went over to see Brantwood and its treasures, and the Professor and Joan received them and showed them everything, and gave orders they should be fed—sending them away rejoicing.

It is like the Interpreter's House in the "Pilgrim's Progress." We go to luncheon there to-day, and then must return the visits of the other kindly lake-dwellers. Mrs. Marshall came (she is the daughter of an old friend) and asked us to dinner, but we won't dine out. One can't, after walking and rowing the whole day. All the same I've seen a great many people since we came here,

[¹ Miss Alexander, authoress and artist. Her "Wayside Songs of Tuscany" were much appreciated by both Mr. and Mrs. La Touche.]

and it is impossible not to be struck with the entire absence of all local gossip and small talk, all interest in vulgar trifles, all respect for smart clothes and smart food.

The people seem either to belong to the world of art and literature, or else to the, perhaps, better world of quiet home-life—gardens, fields, and kindly genuine intercourse with one another. People pay their visits in the course of a mountain-walk, or after a hard row on the lake, so that dressing for the occasion is never thought of.

I've seen no end of lovely flowers and plants. I hope to bring home some. The Professor's garden is in great beauty; he has lovely Irises and a terra-cotta coloured Columbine, which I never saw before.

Mr. La Touche will go home on Monday, when I will go to Brantwood for another week. I think, if we are alive another year, he will want to come here again. The weather has been excellent for walking and rowing, and the very best for light and shade; but it is more like April than July.

If you were a lake-dweller you would not be satisfied with Victor's conduct, and you would not say he was quite right to bite the other dogs. You would be glad he should naturally shun low-minded company, but you would wish him to show courtesy and behave with sweetness and light when he is thrown with other (and perhaps better) dogs. . . .

Kate Greenaway is much beloved at Brantwood, but Francesca¹ more. I quite believe in Francesca; she must be a wonder and a real love.

[¹ Miss Alexander.]

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The "Master" is entirely fetched (after reading the "Story of Ida") by seeing her drawings.

I really do twenty times a day bless Mr. Spurgeon (though of course I had far rather it had been the Archbishop of Canterbury or even Cardinal Manning) for rescuing the "Master" out of the blighting narrowness of a life entirely given to Sport, and enabling him to see the beauty of things he never gave a thought to when he was young. People may talk of goodness narrowing people, but experience proves that any and every kind of spiritual interest (thought of the unseen) enlarges the nature of a person and widens their life. The low, selfish life is the really narrow one. Here endeth my sermon and my letter.

[*To* MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

DUBLIN, *July* 1883.¹

I've fallen back with a thud upon the pavement of everyday life from the mossy and flowery banks of dreamland, and to-day I've got to go and meet Mr. La Touche at a bank (not of dreamland), and then we go home together.

It is so lovely and bright, and I loathe living in a town. I've just been to my milliner's, who generally when I go to her abode dances round me waving bonnets, scarves, jackets, and silks at me. This time I sat down in the customers' best chair, and said to Miss C., "I've been travelling all night and have an exhausted brain, so I implore

[¹ This letter was written on her homeward journey from Brantwood, where she had been so happy.]

you not to take advantage of me, or show me anything but what I ask for, namely, one gown and one bonnet." The appeal was most successful. They *showed* me nothing, but all the young ladies put on scarves and cloaks and tippets as if they were going out for a walk, and proceeded to pass round me, and before me, and across me, as if I was St. Anthony to be tempted. But I bethought me of all the money I had spent, and was as iron to their charms. The bonnet I have chosen is decorated with roses that have been sat upon and slept in. At least so I thought, when it was shown to me; but Miss C. explained that they were the very last and loveliest things in flowers—"crushed roses"—most difficult to make, and absolutely beautiful. So I accepted the crushed roses. But as a veil should be drawn on the process of decay, I made her cover them with black lace. . . . Give my best—no, I only keep one quality—give my love to St. C., to Arthur, and the bairnies.

HARRISTOWN, *August 1883.*

We are having baking Summer weather here again. It is very delicious, but there is no escaping the Autumn sadness, and the splendour and colour of the days makes the early nightfall and cold dew more mournful.

Did you ever notice how all flower-colours seem to intensify and deepen after sunset, particularly the blues and purples? I went into the garden yesterday evening, and got quite a shock. There was a sort of solemn brilliancy, never seen by day. They all seemed to mean something by it. The Cardinal

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lobelias were like saints in a stained-glass window ; and the masses and the tangles of the little blue lobelia, among the Indian pinks, had a *glowiness* that does not belong to blue in daylight. Mr. La Touche, who is not æsthetic (idiotic word), said it was wonderful. And, you know, by that light the colours of ribbons, clothes, bonnets, and human glorifications always lose their force.

I've had some delightful rambles in our woods with Miss Young and her pupils¹ lately, but I could wish I was not so often expected to admire great fat caterpillars, and asked what they would like to eat. Averil's great joy is collecting these people, and seeing what they will turn into. They have all names, such as Miltiades, Aristotle, Demosthenes, &c. And Averil says she will marry an ancient Greek when she grows up : which is, after all, rather like having one's portrait painted by an "old Master."

HARRISTOWN [September 1883].

We have had weather excitements here ; a deluge, drowned cows, haycocks carried away, carts carried down, &c., &c. All this was on a Sunday morning after a downpour of twenty-four hours. Arthur likes seeing convulsions of nature, so I wish you had both been here.

The field one looks upon from my window to the left was all one lake ; the trees standing on their reflections in it. Out of the right-hand window, in the direction of Newberry, another lake gleamed through the trees. All my rocky garden at the well,

[¹ Averil and Beatrix Hewitt.]

the subject of Arthur's pretty sketch, was deep under water. The river was a great broad sheet of brown and silver ; calm at the sides, but all one terrible rush and swirl in the middle. No foam and no noise, but a frightful display of force and speed.

As one stood on the bridge it was a thing to scare one, and seemed trying to suck one down. Logs and debris flew swaying and tumbling at such a pace that one could hardly see them. It was terrible. All the riverside walk from the middle of the " Trivial Round " ¹ to the hill beyond the bridge at the Newberry-walk has been nearly destroyed ; gravel all gone, and big stones rolled out of the foundations (if walks have foundations).

I've just sent to Mr. Allen for two copies of the " Story of Ida," ² and one of " Rock Honeycomb." ³ These are to put out the taste of a horrid book I've been reading, called " Jobson's Enemies." ⁴ The moral of *that* book is, that honesty is the worst policy, that the path of the just is as a gathering darkness that thickens more and more into the perfect night. That if a man is entirely noble, pure, and conscientious (as Jobson is represented to be) all his friends, including his wife, will turn against him, and he must necessarily die ruined, disgraced, and friendless.

After three fat volumes of that sort of thing, one doesn't feel well. It's very unlike Miss Edgeworth ! My love to the Professor. I'll write to him when the sun shines, and I've quite got over Jobson.

[¹ The name given to one of the river-walks at Harristown.]

[² By Miss Alexander.]

[³ Sir Philip Sidney's Psalter, edited by Ruskin.]

[⁴ By Edward Jenkins, M.P.]

HARRISTOWN, June 1884.

I am so glad St. C. likes the little grassy iris. I thought he would, if only it would bloom for him. It is very capricious; some years it is all grass and no blossom, and at all times the flowers have to be looked for. It is sweet too,—smelling something like a plum tart! I found it in a very old-fashioned garden belonging to a cousin of mine in Kildare, where it grows in much luxuriance along the kitchen-garden walks. No one can tell me anything about it. It is evidently an original species not varied by cultivation. I have a book by Robinson very useful and practical, but quite unscientific and unbotanical, a sort of excellent dictionary for gardeners; and among the descriptions of several kinds of iris there is one, *Iris Ruthenica*, *exactly* like ours, and the illustration is evidently meant for it; the only point of difference is, that the book says *Iris Ruthenica* flowers in autumn.

Perhaps you can find out more about it in some of the Professor's beautiful flower-books at Brantwood.

I am glad the Harristown rock-roses are doing well. It is not a good year for flowers here; the wonderfully mild winter kept the poor things awake and trying to grow, when they ought to have been fast asleep under snow-blankets in frost-bedrooms. Instead of which they went on fussing and struggling and fighting, with little frosts and little nipping winds. Now they are all exhausted, and have an up-all-night look!

It has been the very loveliest May I can



HAREBELL.

*Drawn by MRS. L. A. TOUCHE
At Brantwood, 1884, and finished by J. RUSKIN*

remember in all my life ; but June arrived with storm and rain.

[*To MISS YOUNG*]

VILLA MONT FLEURI, MENTONE, 8th Dec. 1884.

Well, we are here,¹ but after a dreadful passage. I did not die, at which I wonder ! "Gruesome" describes it best. After that we had the most comfortable journey south, as there are very few travellers at present, and at the hotels we were treated like Princes. At Dijon especially, I began to think myself a sort of International Potentate, and yet the charges were not high.

We reached Mentone on Saturday, and were received by the Agent, and a beaming pair of servants, Louise and Catherine. Whereupon a deep depression fell on me, at the thought of possible cares and difficulties, and I did not sleep a wink that night. . . .

We have dinner every night at home, and not at the Restaurant quite near.

"Home" it is gradually becoming, tho' at first, of course, a great many little comforts were wanting.

Sunday's rest, a delicious walk to church through air that was full of balm, and sweet as an English May, cleared my brain.

The house is small, but I *do* prefer that. Everything is cleaner than a new pin, and there is a garden ! Lots of roses and geraniums in bloom, also petunias, and many large bushes in full flower.

[¹ This year Mr. La Touche took a villa instead of spending the winter at a hotel, intending to take all meals at a restaurant close by.]

Arbutolons as big as large laurels; eucalyptus, heliotrope, and a bower of *Cobea scandens* in full bloom.

Altogether it is very nice, and I know I *never* wish to have a larger house or more servants. I go in and out of the kitchen and interview Catherine, who is excellent! Golaz the courier is excellent, too. I would not mind having Victor here, but the rules about dogs travelling in France are little short of cruel. . . .

12th Dec. 1884.

Yes, I rejoice in solitude. Still, when things go wrong, one wants some one to speak to, and the "Master" was really rather ill. Then here I have to think of every little thing, and when one's mind is taken up with a nice book on Esoteric Buddhism, and full of the Sanscrit names of the seven Human Principles, it is quite impossible to think about lard, and eggs, and sauces.

However, I think I've done it all pretty well; and the Master is quite satisfied, and has not had a thing to eat that was not good for him, tho' I maintain the sternest simplicity, in hopes of attaining Nirvana at the end of a few hundred million of years.

Certainly, I never was meant to "dwell in marble halls with vassals and serfs" at my side. I am so much happier in a tiny house, with no vassals, and as few serfs as possible.

I do a good deal of shopping, with a basket! It is delightful! The bright sunshine, the chattering peasants in their gay petticoats, the intense blue

of sea and sky, and the amusing shops make it a very different thing from an afternoon in Grafton Street.¹

This is the Feast of St. Bills, and accounts. A Feast I hate, but life is simplified here. My maid comes out wonderfully as an efficiency. She evidently thinks we came here to repair our finances. . . . At the same time I'm more and more convinced that a small house and the fewest possible servants is one of the secrets of happiness. If I had millions a year, and my own way, I would live in a house as small as this one, and make it smaller by turning one of the rooms into a library quite full of books.

V. M. F., MENTONE, *Jan. 1st, 1885.*

I understand exactly what you mean. Christmas is a most dismal time, and all the effort and toil after merriment, that is not a bit spontaneous, jars so horribly.

The church at Carnalway² must have been beautiful. Here the decorations were simple (but the service High), chiefly scarlet-geraniums, and the white perennial candytuft; and long trails of your favourite Spanish ivy, covered with its heads of golden blossom, and lots of roses and palms. No, do not envy us any more, for we have had torrents of rain, off and on, grey skies, cold wind, angry sea, and no sun.

It was rather dismal last week, and one day I would gladly have received a visit from the greatest bore I know!

[¹ Dublin's principal shopping street.]

[² Harristown is in Carnalway Parish.]

The outlook is not cheerful on wet days. These children of the sun look specially wretched when he isn't there. And even the horses wear "signals of distress," black tarpaulin bonnets and coats which look funereal.

Later.

The charm of the unknown is gone from this place. There remains hardly a hill or valley unexplored. The wild flowers won't be good this year after the long drought. Even the rock-roses look dried up, but we are beginning to find a few violets (very sweet), and in nooks where there is the least dampness the maiden-hair fern abounds. If a little soft *warm* rain would come and the wind change, spring would burst upon us in a day. . . .

Well, I stopped writing and went with Mr. La Touche to the Port. That is always the haven where *he* would be. There we potter for hours in contemplation of Italian brigs landing wine, and Mentonese steamers loading with oranges and lemons, sailors of all nations "loungin' and not sufferin'." ¹

In a shop window I saw a placard that shows me life is still worth living. George MacDonald ² is going to give three Shakespeare lectures at Canon Sidebotham's house! That's something!

The sun is blazing to-day, and the beloved barometer in the Harbour stands at *Beau Temps fixe*. The poll-parrot we belove is walking about as if he was the harbour-master. He told us his name was Jacquot. Perhaps he does not swear.

[¹ From "Uncle Remus," by Joel Chandler Harris.]

[² Dr. G. MacDonald and his family were living at Bordighera.]

Possibly he preaches. At any rate he holds forth at great length in a language I do not understand.

V. M. F., MENTONE, *Feb. 1.*

I begin this letter in pure selfishness to help me through a wet Sunday.

It is pouring straight down out of invisible buckets, and is most depressing. With my vast Irish experience of wet days I never saw one like this. It is one o'clock, and still the rain falls in sheets. The sound on the skylight is as the rush and rattle of a shower-bath.

We live beside the bed of a torrent, but until to-day the torrent hasn't been in bed this year. It is generally a wide span of stones and dust; rather drier than the road. Our former wet days only brought down a thread of water a baby could step across. Now a yellow flood is tearing down to the sea, and is the only life and movement I have got to look out upon. Church is impossible, and so is the nice Christian state of mind that makes one say, "I have been there and still would go." I've read all my Septuagesima lessons and the Psalms. And since, I've read the whole of a Shakespeare play ("Coriolanus," and I recommend, that at the next Cabinet Council Mr. Gladstone should read it to his colleagues). . . .

How I wish you had been with me at George MacDonald's lecture on "Macbeth"! He is more human than our dear Professor (Ruskin), his ethics and theories of life are all simple and practicable. It is only so far as we are "entirely

ignoble" that they can seem to us otherwise. Certainly he says things that warm one's heart, and all that is good in one jumps up in cordial response. Although he makes one terribly ashamed of all that isn't good: especially all that is worldly, self-seeking, &c. He doesn't read the play much, only bits to throw light on his analysis of character and motive; and he brings it all to bear on us, our actions, motives, &c., so that it is for his audience a school of morals. One knows he lives up to his principles, one minds him. I felt very wholesomely schooled in the "Macbeth" lecture, and now I'll proceed to give *you* crumbs from the feast.

"Conscience is threefold. The conscience of the intellect, knowing right from wrong; conscience of the imagination, knowing the bearings of right and wrong, the probable results of either course of action; conscience of the will, that says to the Right, I will do it, to the Wrong, I will not do it. A man may have the two first consciences—as Macbeth had—and be the worst man in the world. The deepest conscience of all is the grip of God's hand upon the heart of man."

He spoke so beautifully on the infinite superiority of a pure and obedient will over any amount of light and power in the intellect. "Intellect, though a good gift, has helped many a man to be an efficient devil. The worship of brains and the worship of money are the two sins that are now laying England flat in the dust. The money worship is the worst; for the clever man can't help being clever, but the rich man, in most cases,

ought to have helped being rich. I say solemnly I would rather be an idiot that could love and serve his neighbours than the greatest philosopher that could not."

Then he spoke much about the infinite possibilities of good and bad in every one, and the common brotherhood of us all. What excellent tendencies there might be in utterly stupid poor simple people, and what very bad ones in our superior intellectual selves.

"There is no crime, no depth of wickedness, into which a man or woman may not fall, who starts in life saying, 'I will do what I like.' The higher the intellect, the deeper will be the fall." "There are people who excuse Lady Macbeth, saying she only did her utmost to help her husband to get what he wanted. She helped him to his destruction, as all wives do who act on those principles."

He talked about mothers and children (you won't agree with him in his selection of an example). "Mothers who give their children what they cry for, are just smoothing their road to the devil. I've seen many a cat set an example to human mothers. I've seen the mother-cat discipline her kittens, do justice among them, and show an active concern for their moral behaviour." . . .

Have you had enough?

When I came in yesterday I found that the clergyman had called upon me, so I must go to St. John's Parsonage next Wednesday.

The kind of love George MacDonald wants me to have is the very reverse of that which would

and buying at a bazaar for his pet Home for Invalid Ladies a whole sack full of china! Just when I had told him to buy nothing bigger than would fit into his waistcoat pocket!

I had quite an amusing afternoon yesterday in Dr. Bennet's garden (which is a wonder of rock engineering on the face of a cliff) with Mr. Spurgeon. Well, he may not be in Debrett, but wit and wisdom make any man good company: and earnestness about unseen things *always refines*. Anybody who has these three qualifications may have me to talk to, as much as he or she likes, no matter who or what he or she may be. . . . We sat in a large arbour, on a shelf of the cliff, an immense bank of Chinese primroses in full bloom rising behind us; blazes of anemone-fulgens all round; palms giving a lovely trembling shade; aloes, cactuses, and all sorts of hot-house people thriving above and below us; and all sorts of climbing plants in blossom trailing about over the rocks. Butterflies and bees innumerable, with wild canaries singing in the olives.

Far below us, the Mediterranean asleep in the sunshine, of a warm strange blue that is all its own. It was delightful. . . .

You are right, I am not consistent. I was cross at being here at Christmas, and now I am cross at having to leave. I am developing a sulky disposition; which, after the MacDonald lectures and the Canon's¹ sermons, is inexcusable. . . .

The last lecture on "King Lear" was the best, I think. But what with King Lear, and

[¹ Canon Sidebotham of Mentone.]

what with General Gordon, he made most people cry.

What I like in these lectures besides his wonderful explanation of the characters, their motives, and their development, is their moral teaching. A sort of social ethics that we really all need to be taught, and yet that can't well be put into sermons. I wish—I wish!—he would come into our Bœotia, like a sort of Peter the Hermit, and preach a Crusade against worldliness, vulgarity (which abounds), ostentation, money-grubbing, extravagance, selfishness, prejudice, cruelty, and all the other vices that flourish around us, and that we are so accustomed to that we fail to recognise them.

[Mrs. La Touche's attitude towards sport was entirely antagonistic, and she always averred that fox-hunting was both cruel and demoralising. A friend sending her a copy of the *Tablet* of June 6, 1885, asked her, as a resident in a hunting county, to correct the impressions left in the mind by a very able criticism of a book on Sport. The reviser minimised the "cruelty" evidently, and Mrs. La Touche's letter is scathing in its denunciation of a sport, which she did not consider "manly."]

Arrested development in the human subject is not pleasant to contemplate. The words at once suggest idiocy or some more or less revolting physical defect. The case may be one of cretinism,

or nothing worse than persistent milk-teeth in an otherwise well-developed adult—at all events there is failure of growth and undue continuance of early conditions that ought to have ceased long ago. This is abnormal and unpleasant, and we pity the man or woman we find so constituted.

Therefore we must look with compassion, or at least with softened aversion, on those full-grown and in other respects well-developed persons, who habitually devote their lives to sport. Taken in its true meaning, the word suggests the gambols of such creatures as lambs, kittens, or small children—undeveloped and incapable of work. “The lambs play always, they know no better,” says the child in Jean Ingelow’s poem, “Songs of Seven.” She is conscious that to “play always” would be beneath the dignity of seven years old. It is strange that people do not see a contradiction in terms in the words “Manly Sport.” Sport as such cannot be manly. In principle and essence sport is childish. It may be very expensive, artificial, and dangerous play; it may involve complicated requirements and conditions possible only to adult minds and bodies; but inasmuch as amusement is its *raison d’être* and the object of all its toil, its votaries are merely men who labour under an undue persistence of infantile conditions, and so far fall short of manliness. The greater satisfaction a man finds in playing with huge and expensive toys—the more time he likes to spend in such play—the more he neglects for its sake the real duties and intellectual or domestic amenities of life, the less manly he is, and the more he exhibits the weaker qualities of childhood,

without its gentleness and grace. The infancies of races and individuals are analogous; in both, sportive cruelty prevails. Uncivilised and infant man alike love to run after and catch defenceless creatures, and the sporting gentleman of our day finds his pleasure on the same low level as does the **savage** and the child, but uses his trained wits to erect his play into an institution, environing it with all the nobleness and solemnity that belongs to much spending of money and time, much conquest of difficulties, and much doing of laborious work. For without all these it is not possible in a civilised country to create a sphere for uncivilised instincts to revel in. The cultivators of land must of course banish and destroy noxious animals, and this end is served by the instinct of the chase; but once it is accomplished, the instinct should not survive, but should give place to others more serviceable. It is clearly time it should expire when it reverses the natural action and preserves noxious animals instead of exterminating them. Can a sane mind fail to see the gigantic absurdity of fox-hunting? In the natural order of things, foxes ought to be extinct in England as wolves are. We know the fox-hunter's stock reply to the charge of cruelty—that foxes would vote for the continuance of hunting if they could, because they owe their protected existence to it. But it would be interesting to ask "Brer Fox" which he would prefer—to be mercifully and suddenly shot, or to be terrified and chased for hours, cruelly shut out at his worst need from his home and fortress, and finally torn to pieces by about fifty dogs.

Gentlemen ought to be gentle, and women, whether "ladies" or not, ought to be protectors of life and powerful enemies of all cruelty. But tradition, custom, fashion, and the forced survival of an instinct that should have perished, have made both sexes callous. In the midst of a "run" no one feels that an unfair advantage was taken of the fox by stopping his earth; no one is sorry for the little brown flying creature with all those baying monsters behind it. Girls trained in all the arts and accomplishments will look on, and will accept and proudly treasure pieces of the dismembered animal—will decorate their hats with his brush, and cut the leaves of the newest poem with a paper-knife of which the handle is his paw. The time is not very distant when fox-hunting will be regarded as all now regard the once honoured sports of cock-fighting, boxing, and bear-baiting. Meanwhile let persons of thought and culture who have the misfortune to live in a hunting country have the courage of their opinions, and form those opinions in steady resistance to the stream of tendency on which their neighbours drift. They will be despised by many whose contempt is really an honour; they will be shut out of society from which exclusion is an advantage; but they will be solace and sustenance to the few scholars, thinkers, and workers they may find; and their silent protest will not be quite in vain.

The horsey man will be horsey still; fools will "rage and be confident," as in the time of Solomon; natures incapable of high pleasures will follow lower ones. Only let those who know better live up to

their better knowledge, and try to increase and spread it. Though we cannot allow that any sport or play is in itself manly, we freely admit that the child survives (and rightly) in the man; and that recreation and amusement are as necessary to his complete welfare as pure air and sufficient food; but surely it is possible for a rightly-ordered society to provide its members with abundant diversion, exercise, and even wholesome excitement in the way of sports, games, and trials of strength and skill. If to "ride abroad, redressing human wrongs," is no longer desirable, or would fail to amuse, surely men may "witch the world with noble horsemanship," without riding either "to hounds" or to the winning-post of a race-course.

A man will love his horse and his dog, and enjoy their company and services the more, for having only one of each. And it is certain that the man who can amuse himself without transgressing the noble rule "never to blend our pleasure or our pride with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels," has far more joy and less "bore" in his life than the man to whom the four seasons only mean time to fish, time to race, time to shoot, and time to hunt; who, in an Italian valley, says there is nothing to do, because he can find nothing to kill; and who deprives himself and his family of the power of enjoying a thousand real and keen delights, that he may devote all his resources, physical, mental, and financial, to the practice and promotion of "Manly Sport."

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

[*July (?) 1885.*]

I wish I could have shown you the wonderfully gorgeous spectacle that met our eyes on Saturday as we went slowly over part of the new railway.¹ All the cuttings, embankments, and stony heaps, one sea of fire with scarlet poppies; making lines and lakes and mountains of flaming light as far as one could see along the line, and in broken heaps and masses, and scarlet spray beside it. Here and there, where the scarlet mass was less dense, a sort of gorgeous Eastern embroidery effect, from tall hawkweed and big daisies rising through the poppies, and among them now and then a few tufts of grey poppies. I never saw or dreamt of (and I am a great dreamer of impossible flowers) such a revel of colour. Not only the railway, and waste places, but every hedge-row and field was dashed and sprinkled with the poppy-red, the sun blazing on it all. It looked so joyful, for it is not at all blood colour, nor fire colour, tho' one regards it as a sort of flame.

September 11th, 1885.

What do you think of the present Irish fashion of playing rounders instead of tennis at parties? It is all the rage now, and it amazes one to see British matrons racing round and round in a wet meadow, squires, barristers, majors, and lesser

[¹ The new railway from Sallins to Baltinglass passed through a part of the Harristown property.]

lights, flinging balls at them. Occasionally there are collisions, and "ladies of quality" may be seen floundering on the grass, with their—shoes—in the air! All this is accompanied by the wildest yells and shrieks.

Never having been in Billingsgate Market, or present at the sack of a town, I never knew, till I witnessed a game of rounders, what the female voice was capable of in the way of ear-piercing shrieks. Do you think *that* pretty behaviour? Would you like to come and play with us? Only I won't play.

The things I do play at are beginning to fail me a little, and the hot weather has made the garden look miserable.

[To Miss YOUNG]

HARRISTOWN, Feb. 1886.

What do you think of your dog Victor? He is Miss D——'s dog, as he prefers her house to mine, and he won't stay here, whatever we do. Every one says it is the most extraordinary behaviour of a dog that was ever heard or read of. After living here, just ten years, on the fat of the land, sleeping in my bed, being petted and made much of, he goes away and remains away at the D——s' farm. They never encourage him, and have tried many times to send him back. He never has meat or any nice food, and . . . there are cats (nasty common ones) there. Although he seems glad to see me when he is brought back, and glad of ten dinners, two beds,

and as many breakfasts as he can get, he invariably flies back to the farm at the first chance.

I've lost my faith in dogs. I mean never to have another.

If Victor had died I would have got another dog for love of him. Life in general and our nervous systems go more smoothly now that we are not subject to a volley of barks every minute. . . .

I forgot to tell you that when I was last in Dublin I made the acquaintance of Dr. Scharff¹ at the Museum. He and I sat together on the wooden stand of the skeleton of the Irish Elk with a box of bones out of our Relagheen Field² between us, talking about them, and about frogs and toads with deep enjoyment.

He wants a whole skull, if I can bring him one out of the Relagheen Field. But I told him they were, every one, broken ; which he said was to be expected in an Irish battle.

I really was "bould as brass" ; for I went and obtruded myself into the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, and asked to see ancient Ordnance Maps, and certain old MSS. about the Co. Kildare.

I sat there ever so long studying them without any special result.

Now I do want to know a little history. Mr. La Touche declares that he read somewhere (but he never reads anywhere) that there was once a

[¹ Dr. R. F. Scharff of the Royal Dublin Museum, Kildare Street.]

[² The Relagheen Field at Harristown is close to an old ford on the River Liffey which must have been the scene of many faction fights in olden times. Even to this day, when it is ploughed, human bones are found. No one was ever able to prove Mr. La Touche's theory about the Danes and the Swedes having fought there.]

great battle between the Danes and the Swedes in Ireland for the possession of the country, and that they fought in our Relagheen Field—to his certain knowledge! Do tell me whether they did. Of course you know.

He also says his father always said so. I never heard of my father-in-law as an eminent historian, but *you* are that. . . .

No. I won't have a little dog. Dogs interfere too much with one's personal freedom. They are inquisitive about one's daily plans, and express their own wishes on every subject in a manner no one could stand from a Christian child. I really can't, at my time of life, go into service again.

Luna¹ is not a bit old, and is very well, but she keeps to herself and never orders one about, as dogs do. As for expecting to be taken out in the carriage she never dreams of it. She has her own visiting-list, and my movements do not interest her.

[*From* PROFESSOR RUSKIN]

OXFORD, 9th June, 1886.

I have just got your letter, for the "morning glory" of the first day of new, consistent work here, and anywhere: for the talk² at the "Feathers"³ ended the excitement and confusion of beginning again, and I'm settled to my summer tasks—and indeed

[¹ A Persian cat.]

[² Ruskin had this year delivered a lecture on Art—he calls it a "talk"—in Mrs. Bishop's drawing-room.]

[³ The name given by Mrs. La Touche to her cousin Mrs. Bishop's house in Prince of Wales Terrace.]

and in truth, there is *no* one who can help me as you can, for you see with my eyes and more—and feel as I feel—perhaps in some directions only the least bit less—and speak more clearly than any living animal can speak or sing, except an Irishwoman. And you're to write whenever you can, only for goodness sake not on that gritty paper, which makes me shiver and shudder like a knife on a rough plate. How ever you can, passes all my wits to think.

I'm very well—and more at peace than for many a day, and I've no eggs to be anxious about—they're all left in the sand, but I think some of them will hatch some day. I hope to send you some nicer things than those lectures to read.

The potato lily and the sitting finch¹ are altogether precious to me.

[To MISS YOUNG]

HARRISTOWN, BRANNOXTOWN, [June?], 1886.

Your enclosures are interesting, but your friend has Papistical proclivities decidedly. He is quite right to have sympathy with "verts." I have it too, though I have no "verty" tendency myself. There are people I would gladly see received into the Catholic Church, because I think it would be good for their morals. (You are not one of them.) But I have no horror of those who leave the R. C. Church for the "dreariness of Protestantism." They can't feel the dreariness, and possibly they felt

[¹ This refers to a plant which refused to grow at Harristown, and to some notes Mrs. La Touche wrote for "Love's Meinie."]

something worse (to them) than dreariness in the Church of Rome.

Before all things, let us be true to ourselves. Religion is a thing to live by. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." That's all that signifies. Many people can keep them better by having all sorts of external helps; by confession and direction, and their crutches and their sign-posts. Others are helped by the very freedom and individualism which is the dreariness of Protestantism. Others, again, are lifted into the light, and set upon their feet by methods such as General Booth's. I have no horror of them, nor of people who, leaving one system, adopt another in all sincerity. Here endeth my discourse.

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

HARRISTOWN, *June 1886.*

You ask about our troubles over here.

The truest and "rightest" reports about Ireland, and the wisest opinions, are to be found in the *Times*.¹ We in Ireland are so thankful to that

[¹ In these years (from about 1882) excellent articles on Irish affairs appeared in the *Times*. Loyalists in Ireland were enthusiastic over the attitude of London's leading paper in the Home Rule struggle. Mrs. La Touche wrote at the time of the Pigott trial (1888):—

"Isn't it dreadful about Pigott? The whole thing is too seriously unfortunate for me to say 'I told you so,' but how my nose was bitten off last year, by every one to whom I ventured to say, I could detect forgery in those facsimile letters. There is plenty of good evidence without them, but the one fatal mistake will blind the British Public to all the good work the *Times* has done.]

paper for its honest and faithful work in showing England the bare truth. Other papers on Irish affairs are generally one mass of misrepresentation.

We poor landlords are having a very bad time now, as by the recent legislation leases are being broken and rents cut down. The farmers are wilfully neglecting the land, letting drains get choked, omitting to manure on purpose that when the Commissioners for readjusting the rents come round, they may see the land at its very worst, and reduce the rent still more. It is wonderful how all this has caused the land to deteriorate.

Carlyle says any one is a benefactor to the country who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, but Parnell & Co. have so managed that now there is but one blade of grass where there used to be two. Mr. La Touche is wearing himself out, having interviews with his tenants so as to avoid litigation, but Irishmen who hate Law and Order do entirely love law and strife.

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We are having a gleam of sun to-day; it is quite a sensation. I have not seen my shadow for such a long time I quite miss it. It is often—or used to be—my only companion in long walks, and it used to get so nice and tall as it and I walked together in the summer evenings across the fields. I hope we shall see one another to-day. I see the trees have all got theirs, so mine will not fail me. But it is very unsummery, and there is a howling wind.

HARRISTOWN, *June* 1886.

I hope you won't mind, and be bored at the packet of I.L.P.U.¹ literature that I am sending you. In view of the possibility of a General Election² soon, we Loyal Irish are most anxious to enlighten England as to the great danger of giving Ireland Home Rule. And we are bound to send these papers (which are given to us for nothing) to all our English correspondents, asking them to give them about to farmers, tradespeople, workmen, &c., &c.

A great deal is expected from thus spreading the "Light." Another way would be to fold them into spills and light your candle with them, which of course you can do!

How interesting about Edward Lear! I know his "Nonsense Botany" quite well. It is delicious. It was sweet of you to tell me about my Lady Jingly.³ . . . I don't know which daffodil is specially the Irish one. I know they grow in thick tufts and masses in the north of Ireland, all over the pastures, to the great distress of the farmers, as the cows don't eat them and they diminish the grass. We have planted a great many common daffodils here which the mice seem fond of. Thank you, ever so much, for the dietary rules. I am sure they are excellent, and I will keep them carefully. I mean I will keep

[¹ Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union.]

[² The election took place on August 3, 1886. After the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, and Mr. A. J. Balfour Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the new Government.]

[³ A zinc wheelbarrow always used by Mrs. La Touche when gardening, so named.]

them in a drawer, I am not so sure of keeping them as we keep (or ought to keep) the ten commandments. But I admire any one who does keep them.

I can't think what one would eat for breakfast. Waferesque toast would be so uncomfortable to begin the day on, especially with tea without milk or sugar. I should not mind dining by those excellent rules. But oh! my four o'clock tea with no bread and butter, and no cream or sugar!

[To MISS YOUNG]

DUBLIN, Dec. 1886.

The weather is horrid, and the streets filthy ; making me not want to go out.

My tea party at Mrs. S——'s was very pleasant. She is a kind, cordial woman whom I like. She is on a visit to her brother, who seems to have been all over Asia. His house is full of the most lovely Eastern things, unlike any I ever saw at Liberty's or any other emporium of Eastern Art. He must have a quite wonderful taste, as in addition to the beauty of the things they are all arranged in the most artistic way. There are no "monsters" and each "*objet*" was quite beautiful in itself. I went with Mrs. La Touche of Bellevue, and we had a very good time indeed. . . .

No, I won't have your "fonetick" spelling, though the papers you send are very amusing. But it won't do. At least, I hate it. It takes all the life and all the history out of the language. Our

odd spellings are all full of meaning and have a history, like fossils in rocks. They have come by a natural process of evolution, and reversion, and atavism, and other interesting principles; and there is more to be learnt by leaving them unchanged than can be gained by altering them.

Read the "Brontes in Ireland."¹ It is most interesting and original. Such extraordinary people and strange times.

I am sending you a number of a goodish magazine, and also a bit of real good French—a little sketch of Mrs. Craven's² life. . . .

I've not heard the result of the vestry-meeting,³ but I think "where to put the font" is going to be a real stumblingblock. Of course it cannot, and must not, be put in front of the altar (which is where I've no doubt our vestry would like it put), nor can it be in the aisle, where it was before, because we cannot make burnt-offerings of our babies, and the furnace is just there. The little alcove, or rather "grove" which they have scooped out of the thickness of the wall of the tower, doesn't admit, it seems to me, of the presence of any sponsors or witnesses. One very thin clergyman—one emaciated mother or nurse—and one minute baby—are as much as the space will hold.

It is also as cold and draughty a spot as could be chosen. You see how careful we are to collect *all* the bones of contention we can for production at our vestries here.

[¹ By Dr. William Wright.]

[² Authoress of *La Récit d'une Sœur*.]

[³ Carnalway Parish.]

A Letter to the "Pall Mall Gazette."

A PROTEST AGAINST FOX-HUNTING.

[1886?]

For any one who has man's full share of wits and sensibilities, it is not altogether cheerful to live in a hunting county, where nothing is so much revered as sport, and where every one is expected to recognise and obey its traditions and unwritten laws. Society in such a county is reduced to a clique, than which no coterie of old maids can be more narrow and exclusive. If any intelligent outsider strays into the charmed circle—for instance, "a wretched fellow who writes poetry," or "a fool of a man who collects coins"—the hearty desire of his neighbours will be to "heave half a brick at him." If, which is scarcely conceivable, the intelligent outsider (never having been trained in the way he and every man should go) takes up his residence in Huntshire, he will find himself effectually boycotted, or at best reluctantly tolerated, as an interloper who keeps out a better man. He may buy a little polite recognition by subscribing to the hounds and giving a cover to the hunt; but woe betide him if he makes the shameless statement that he has other uses for his money and his land. He may wish to be sociable and hospitable, but unless he is ready to run in the same narrow groove as the rest of his neighbours, he will find himself alone in every thought, aim, and idea. No one will know what to talk to him about; no

one will want to hear what he has to say. If he has plenty of mental resources, and is willing to do other people's duties besides his own, he may content himself in Huntshire, and even be deeply thankful for his unpopularity. But a non-hunting man who is naturally social and sympathetic, and not inclined either to work or play alone, will find the moral atmosphere nearly killing, and will not endure it long.

And what is this all-absorbing, glorious pursuit? A little beast of prey that ought to have died out, as did the wolf and bear, before the advancing forces of civilisation, is carefully and at great expense preserved, in order that a vast and costly system may exist to enable men (and women too, unhappily) to ride after several dogs in pursuit of the said creature. They do not particularly want to catch it; it would be terrible to catch too many and so render foxes scarce. They only want to amuse themselves in what they consider the most excellent way. Excellent it must be, for it occupies about three-fourths of a man's time, generally costs him more than he can afford, and causes him to deprive himself and his family, for its sake, of many real comforts and delights, for which, however, he may have succeeded in destroying his taste and aptitude.

We have long ceased to think that gentlemen ought to be gentle, and that women ought to be protectors of life and enemies of all cruelty. To some of us it may be a terror, to others a hope, to see in the not very distant future the approach of social forces that will ultimately break down the

idol Sport, with many another Dagon we now worship. Huntshire will not be always a portion for foxes.

[A friend wrote asking Mrs. La Touche for her views on Dinner Parties. The following was her reply.]

1888.

If it amuses people to crowd together in troops, why can't they manage to do it so that it shall be all amusement and no trouble? Or, at least, as little as possible? If it pleases them to eat together in each other's houses, as a change from eating at home, why must the food be more elaborate and expensive on such occasions than usual, and take twice as long to consume? Why should social pleasures involve labour, anxiety, and expense? I aver that the element of enjoyment is, as often as not, entirely eliminated from our social gatherings. There is nothing spontaneous, nothing impromptu about them. "Of course not," says Mrs. Grundy, "the thing must be done properly if one attempts to do it at all."

Well, what is the thing that must be done properly? We will assume that it is a Dinner-party. Sixteen people assemble in a drawing-room, all carefully selected and paired by an experienced hostess, who, however, cannot quite banish from her countenance a look of restless anxiety, because her soul is consumed with fear lest her most important guest should be late.

Very late he probably is! and, in that case, all

faces have gathered blackness—including the hostess's—by the time he appears.

Then comes the compulsory pairing, and the solemn procession down stairs. Surely each guest must say in his heart, "What have I done that I am thus taken into custody for an hour or more, and that nothing but serious and sudden illness can save me from having to sit immovable between the same two people until each rite of this long ceremony be accomplished?" At the best, the conversation is a series of jerky *tête-à-têtes*. You are supposed, I believe, to give about three-quarters of your notice to him, or her, who was your partner in the procession, and the remaining quarter to your custodian on the other side.

You must also take an intelligent interest in the menu, make mental notes of the table decorations; endure with patience (for what with guests, attendants, and steaming dishes, the oxygen is always insufficient) the suffocating atmosphere, and the clatter of tongues and cutlery.

You must always, too, refrain from any demonstration of glee or relief when, having endured to the end, you emerge into the mitigated captivity of the drawing-room.

Does this banquet give real joy to any one?

Perhaps the givers of the feast and their cook take a reprehensible pleasure in feeling it was better done than most other people could do it. Perhaps one or two guests—who are not ashamed of having elevated greediness into a science—rejoice in the excellence of the cates provided, and the consciousness of having had a dinner that "was

a dinner indeed!" But, on the whole, I contend that no "vital feelings of delight" have been awakened in the bosoms of guests or hosts.

Half a dozen people who know, or want to know, each other well—who have ideas in common, and subjects to talk on, form the ideal of a happy dinner-party. For the thing does exist.

A round table, general unforced conversation, good food of the same sort as the dinner-givers naturally live on; good wine (if wine there must be); quiet sequence of the fewest possible courses; a few flowers of the season—or leaves, if flowers be scarce; *as much fresh air as may be*; and plenty of talk, free and friendly—partly inspired, perhaps, by a little good after-dinner coffee. *That* is a dinner-party for rational beings.

The other sort is all toil and trouble, ostentation, expense, and discomfort. In short, the vulgar outcome of one of Mrs. Grundy's principles, "High Living and Low Thinking."

[To MISS YOUNG]

DUBLIN, Jan. 1889.

Your letter came yesterday, and helped to warm me on the coldest Sunday I ever remember. I went to Church at the Magdalen, Leeson Street, because I had a hankering after the Broad-Church preachments of Canon Carmichael. And in that I was well satisfied. But it is not my idea of a nice church, and the people are very badly-behaved, coming in very late with as much noise as possible. I much like that Canon's sermons.

This afternoon I go to Professor Barrett's Lecture on Light.¹ These Lectures interest me greatly, and though they go on at "Tea O'clock" I can make the sacrifice. Next summer, when you insist on going on about King Stephen, Henry VIII. and the Constitutions of Clarendon, I'll be able to ask you questions about Refraction; which is much more important. Those kings are dead, I believe; and if they made any laws, those laws have all been altered. But Light is alive; and the laws of refraction and reflection can't be changed by any king.

I had luncheon with an old friend in Merrion Square on Saturday (she was born one of the Purcells of Halverstown)—Mrs. Macdonnell. She is a beautiful person, and can do many things. Her daughters are given to good works. One of them took me, after lunch, into a part of Dublin I had not seen before (attainable through their stables and coachhouse) to see Penny Dinners going on. Several working men were eating great platefuls of hot bacon, potatoes, and cabbage. There was a delicious, but powerful, bouquet of what I may call *Ouvrier aux Choux*.

Thank you very much for the Honesty seeds. But is there any hope that honesty will grow on Irish soil?

It will be nice to get back to the garden and

[¹ Mrs. La Touche made Professor Barrett's acquaintance this year, and much enjoyed his society, both being at the time interested in Psychical Research. The course of lectures referred to were given at Leinster House, and were much appreciated in Dublin.]

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the country. Since Mr. La Touche went home and I've been alone here, I've lost an anchor by which I could always pull myself off social rocks, by saying I could not leave him quite alone. I resolutely refuse to accept or practise evening hospitalities.

HARRISTOWN, *March 1889.*

It is very good to be back in one's "briar patch," but we've had a fall of snow and the place is all snowy slush.

I miss the nice little black dog belonging to the hotel in Dublin. She is called Nellie, and is of the Victor sort—with this difference, that whereas Victor has a nearly white body and a nearly black soul, she has a nearly black body and a nearly white soul!

The Kilcullen Dorcas Christmas Tree organised by Mrs. Wakefield was objected to by Father Langan. He was invited to be present, but he declined, and would not allow the R. C. children to be present either. We all gave things, and the eatables will be distributed without any demonstration.

There was a Choir Party at Newberry, to which I contributed the milk and cream—except those milks of human-kindness which are only sometimes to be found in my dairy.

I forgot to tell you that on my last morning in Dublin I went into the College of Science; a fascinating place, but not a thing could I understand! I do want to know about the electric forces, and heat, light, magnetic currents, elevators

and much more. I know nothing. Now, what does it signify whom some dead and disreputable buffer of a king married five hundred years ago in comparison to the wonderful way the bisulphide of carbon reflects and magnifies the spectrum? . . .

BRANNOXTOWN,¹ *May 1891.*

Unlike you, I don't live in a nest of people, and have no ups and downs, and comings and goings to record, except of people with fur and feathers.

Luna has three nearly grown up kittens, all beautiful and all fluffy. The swallows are building in the eaves of their humble abode; and starlings in those of the adjacent heretical place of worship.² We have a good view of their proceedings from our small dinner-table. I wish we could build as easily as they do. They have not consulted any architect nor received tenders from any builders!

A very nice girl came here on Whit Monday, whose father had business with the Master. She was quite young, not twenty, but was so well read and cultured; knew about evolution and attended a school-of-art. It is rather refreshing to talk to a person with whom one has not (and could not possibly have) a single human acquaintance in common. Knowing this, one is driven to talk on bigger, better, and far more interesting subjects.

No doubt, we (the girl and I) each in our own circle of acquaintance, would have twaddled and

[¹ This first letter is from the cottage at Brannoxtown, where Mr. and Mrs. La Touche lived for two years after the burning of Harris-town.]

[² The Brannoxtown Baptist Chapel, built by Mr. La Touche.]

gossiped by the hour. But, meeting as representatives of two quite different environments, all peoply-subjects were excluded, and we were free to talk sense.

It's a great moral training to live here, and it certainly strengthens one's nerves. One learns equanimity and acquires the power of withdrawing one's consciousness from disturbing sights and sounds.

One's senses inform one (but I don't listen) of every single thing that goes on, in and around the little house. I can hear the digging in the flower-beds, the stirring of the saucepans in the kitchen, and every variety of food is smellable in every room.

No member of the household can sneeze in secret; nor can any one approach the house—back or front—without passing before one or other of my two drawing-room windows.

EARL'S COURT, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, 1892.

Don't I write perpetually? I thought I did.

Ever since we came we've been enjoying quite superior colds. Mine is better, but the poor Master is still very bad. However I got him out for a Sabbath-breaking walk yesterday morning, instead of going to his church.

Such a nice black cat sitting doing a meditation on the top of a low wall spoke to us when we passed, and waved his tail and purred, thanking us for speaking to him. He opened wide his emerald eyes, and I think asked after Luna and Darius.

Florence¹ came and took me to see Mme. de

[¹ Miss Bishop, now Mrs. Hubert Burke.]

Navarro and her husband.¹ I quite love both those people. In her own house she is perfectly charming, full of great and gracious ways, and yet withal as natural as a child. When one sees her without her hat and cloak, she is really beautiful. It is such a noble, statuesque head, and so beautifully set on. She reminds one very much of the Venus de Milo in the Louvre; and it is very rare to see a big, tall person overflowing with animation, full of movement, yet always absolutely graceful: her conversation is delightful too. She showed us so many pretty things, including the first tribute she ever received—her first appearance on the stage—a wreath of real bay-leaves, and she has kept it ever since. Her husband showed me heaps of her photographs in all her different characters, and in private life too.

The posts here are maddening; and we get piles of troublesome letters screaming for answers, shouting for money. Sometimes I am inclined to wish myself back in the peaceful solitude of Brannoxtown. I hate the thought of a week in London. There very likely will be no daylight to see either shops or Museums. The air will be simply poisonous. Too much carbon and no ozone; and, above all, Rose² is an immense way

[¹ At this time (1892) M. and Mme. de Navarro (Mary Anderson, the famous actress) were living at Tunbridge Wells, and were very intimate with Mrs. Bishop and her family. Until this year Mrs. La Touche had never met them, but she always maintained that Mme. de Navarro was one of the most beautiful women she had ever seen. They met many times during this visit with, I think, mutual pleasure.]

[² Mrs. La Touche's granddaughter, Miss Ward, married, Dec. 10, 1889, Major John Hotham, R.H.A.]

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off from Dover Street, where it seems we are bound to dwell.

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

BRANNOXTOWN, COUNTY KILDARE, *Good Friday, 1892.*

DEAREST JOANIE,—It was good to see your handwriting again, and it was sweet of you to ask after “the Sweetness.”¹ We were in great anxiety about her, for we saw in the papers that the *Avoca* had put in to Gibraltar for repairs, having encountered terrific weather. . . . She is now safe at Mhow, and all is well.

We are getting on fast with the rebuilding of Harristown. It contradicts the proverb that a watched pot never boils. For never was a pot so watched, and stirred, and peeped into. The “Master” is there every day of his life, examining every brick and stone and plank. He has fingers, and thumbs too, in every pie of mortar and cement. All the ground-floor rooms will be exactly as they were before. The outer walls being all solid, and foundations of the inner ones being still traceable, the architect thought it best to distribute the space exactly as it was before. And as most of the furniture was saved, all our living rooms remain nearly unchanged. The Gallery has one more room, but there is no “High Hall” any more, and the amount of servants’-rooms is totally inadequate.

By September we shall be settled again. We

[¹ Mrs. La Touche’s granddaughter, Mrs. John Hotham, was on her way to India, and had a very bad crossing of the Bay of Biscay.]

are quite sufficiently comfortable in this little house. Do you know you are a benefactor to Kildare by introducing Shirley poppies? The seed you gave me has poppified all Kildare, a good deal of Scotland, and part of India! The flowers continue as beautiful as ever, not degenerating. This year I've flung the seed recklessly everywhere, besides sowing it properly in beds. We are not having a nice spring. April has quite forgotten her showers, and March did not roar, he sulked; and twice he has buried us in deep snow. This month began with ten days of August weather, then bitter cold and frost. There is hardly any grass for the cattle, and though there are plenty of flowers, and a perfect revel of daffodils, they can't afford themselves a proper length of stalk, and so can't dance as daffodils should. . . .

[*To Miss Young*]

BRANNOXTOWN, *May 1892.*

. . . I've got to present myself this afternoon at the Rectory, where there is to be a G.F.S. meeting. I have also been solemnly asked by a lady from beyond Baltinglass for permission to have a big G.F.S. picnic here in July, where three branches of the society are to "gather at the river." I get a good deal of entertainment, living next door to Brannoxtown Baptist Chapel. They had a service last night, and no less than seventy people attended! two car loads of soldiers from the Curragh.

As we sat at dinner I saw all the arrivals,

and heard the opening hymn, "Onward, Christian So—oldiers," taken so fearfully slowly that one felt the Christian soldiers did not mean to hurry themselves, and evidently wished to remain non-combatants.

The building of the house¹ gets on fast. The grates and chimney-pieces are put in. The Canova chimney-piece that was in the billiard-room is now in the big drawing-room, and the Roman mosaic one is in my sitting-room.

At this moment they are building up the staircase.

BRANNOXTOWN, *June 1892.*

Do start Wednesday night if you can; the sooner the better; and I may possibly meet you in Dublin, after all, and come down with you.

You must fancy you are on board a yacht when you are here, and rejoice that it does not wobble up and down: by this exercise of the imagination it won't seem quite so uncomfortable. When you hear noises, and smell smells, you must say to yourself, "They are working the capstan," or "The crew are at their dinner." The noise will be the neighbours' cocks and donkeys and our cats, the smells will be Mary's cooking. I have got so perfectly accustomed to all these things that I no longer feel them, but you will. Also flocks of sheep go bleating along the road, and their drivers, generally drunk, shout and sing.

I've been reading much of Sully Prudhomme,

[¹ Harristown.]

his *Art de Vers*, and several volumes of his poems. He certainly is a great poet—the Tennyson of France. There is going to be an article about him in the *Spectator*.

[Mrs. La Touche read much French poetry, and was quite convinced that Sully Prudhomme¹ was the best of modern French poets. She highly approved of his *Art de Vers*.]

[To MRS. LA TOUCHE of Bellevue]

BRANNOXTOWN, CO. KILDARE, Jan. 20th, 1893.

. . . I ought to have written before I left Dublin; but I thought I would find writing a resource and a consolation when I got back here, on some dull, grey, cold morning, when one's thoughts turn more especially to absent friends, and solitude loses its charm for a time.

I am glad you are not going abroad; it is such a long journey before one can get to any enjoyable abode of sunshine, and we are not all as young or brisk as Mr. Gladstone, and I fear good people are much more easily killed than bad ones! We are having an interval of mild weather now. I believe it is because I have given myself a coat lined with fur. The forces of Nature won't permit me to put it on. . . .

The garden is cold and uninteresting at present, but contains varied hopes which will arise in due time, and there are nice things in the green-houses. . . .

[¹ Sully Prudhomme, poet and philosopher, born 1839.]

Have you read "Aunt Anne"?¹ It is such a clever study of a very odd and yet very real character, and it is something new to read a book of which the heroine is over sixty. Some people say it is a horrid book, because it holds up an old lady to ridicule. I do not think it does. Aunt Anne is a most pathetic figure, even when she does the most absurd things, and I really feel quite fond of her.

"Cecilia de Noel"² is quite beautiful, and full of noble suggestions. It is not easy to find a novel now in which some of the characters do not dance round the seventh commandment, and give it many hard kicks, even a fracture sometimes! At this moment my favourite literature is seedsmen's catalogues. And most exciting and demoralising I find it, filling one's mind with delusions of floral possibilities, and tempting one to wild extravagance in buying half-crown packets of seeds that refuse to germinate, and plants that "die on me" before I have had them a week. I ought to profit by experience, but every year these horrid illustrated catalogues tempt me to my ruin.

I paid a visit to Charlotte³ before I left Dublin, and found her well and happy, with all her little plants growing round her, and behaving properly, as my plants never do.

[¹ By Mrs. W. K. Clifford.]

[² By Lanoe Falconer.]

[³ Miss La Touche of Bellevue.]



Photo, A. Werner

MARIA LA TOUCHE. 1893

[*To Miss YOUNG*]

BRANNOXTOWN, *Feb.* 1893.

I do wish you were here, and I also wish I could go with you to those lectures on English Novelists.¹

The snow is so detestable I've not gone out for a whole week. It is very pretty to look at from the window, but I am tired of the Christmas-card scenery and its dazzle.

I see sheets of ice on the river, with rooks and water-hens parading upon them. The cattle are much disobliged on finding their favourite drinking-places frozen up. The Church was most dreadfully cold, as something had gone wrong with the heating apparatus. It roasts four people, two at each end of each pew, to right and left, leaving the rest of the Church deadly cold. It is really a service of danger to say one's prayers there in this weather.

However, "Oft in danger, oft in woe, onward, Christian, onward go"—to your Parish Church!

I went to the School Inspection yesterday, and listened with interest. What is the use, tell me, of parsing? Everybody knows by the light of nature when to say "bad, worse, worst"; why should they be bothered with comparative and superlative, &c., &c., and why should the children be asked what part of speech "thou" is? Who cares? We all

[¹ A course of lectures I was attending in Scotland given by one of the professors of Queen Margaret's College, Glasgow. The notes taken were sent on to Ireland for Mrs. La Touche's instruction and amusement.]

know where to put it in any speech we may be making.

[*To* MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

BRANNOXTOWN, *March 5th*, 1893.

I am so glad to see your handwriting again. It makes me feel warm on a very cold day. I am so interested at hearing of the improvements at Brantwood, and am so glad to hear that St. C. is well. I perceive you are Queen of Norway and Sweden.¹ I remember Norway well, and admired him much. . . .

I am amused at your boys having met Mr. Balfour. Tell them I can understand their being more interested in the great Moon. However, Mr. Balfour² was goal-keeper for "All Ireland" for many years, and kept it well—bringing Ireland to the Goal of Peace, where, however, our blessed island never wishes to find itself.

I've greatly approved of all he did while he was in office. Indeed, we never had so good a Chief-Secretary or were so well ruled. But we don't think his Local Government Bill or his Land Purchase Act will work well. I'm so sorry and ashamed to know what a foolish nation we are, but so it is, and giving us Local Government is very like giving Nursery Government to the two youngest and most quarrelsome of the babies.

You tell me the Professor plays now, and does not work. I am glad. He has done such an

[¹ Mrs. Severn had a pair of ponies so named.]

[² The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, formerly Chief Secretary for Ireland.]

enormous amount of the best work in his life that he has a right to play.

I have got a slight frenzy for playing Patience with tiny packs of cards. There are such a number of different Patiences; and there is a certain peaceful excitement in playing by oneself against a *Ghostly-Enemy-Luck!* I wonder if St. C. would think that game amusing?

My play-garden is in a disappointing state. The Fauna seem to be in league against the Flora. Rabbits have increased, and come up on the lawn to graze upon my most precious plants. Rooks and jackdaws walk in black and solemn procession, looking like the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and pick off my daffodil and hyacinth buds.

I wonder much if the grassy Iris I sent you a few years ago flourished? It ought to flower about May.

I must tell you about our oat-fields — about half the crop is destroyed. I wrote to the *Field*, and the answer says the demons are the Larvæ of the Daddy Longlegs. Now I quite understand the Nursery-classic that taught us "That old Daddy Longlegs wouldn't say his prayers!" Naturally he couldn't, being a born *fiend*. However, one night there descended a gracious rain with much violence, and all the fiends came to the surface to dry themselves, and immediately an enormous clerical meeting (of rooks) was held, covering both the oat-fields with black-coated ministers, and the devils were cast, not *out* but *in*! I don't believe there's one left; and what remains of the crop has grown beyond their power.

[To Miss Young]

BRANNOXTOWN, *April 1893.*

We have just had a long afternoon at Harris-town with the Architect. The work advances fast, and the lawn is being healed of its gashes and scars. I did so hate seeing it all torn and spoilt, and I fear I'll not live to see it "green velvet" again. . . . I have invented a new pattern for the flower-beds before the windows. You will come to me in August, and be with us when we settle into the new house. There will be so much to do, and think of. Now it is bad enough, but then it will be worse, and it would be nice to be three instead of two. . . .

Do read "Grania,"¹ by Emily Lawless. It is as beautiful a book as I have ever read; an idyll of peasant-life in the Islands of Aran, off Galway. It is wonderfully clever and imaginative; quite a work of genius I think. But I am not sure that the novel-reading public, fed on Ouida and Miss Braddon, will care for it. It is quite a pearl, and I fear most people are swine. . . .

I've also been reading "Social Studies,"² by Lady Wilde. There are some good things in the book, but she says we ought none of us to wear

[¹ "Grania: The Story of an Island." By the Hon. E. Lawless. This book, written by the daughter of an old friend, Lady Cloncurry, delighted Mrs. La Touche, giving, as she said, such vivid pictures of the wild west coast.]

[² Mrs. La Touche had known Lady Wilde in Dublin, where her husband, Sir William Wilde, was long one of the leading doctors, and she herself had been much mixed up with politics. Her poems, written under the name of "Speranza," are almost forgotten now. This book, "Social Studies," had not much merit.]

black, when we are in mourning! The older and uglier we are the more it becomes our duty, in her opinion, to contribute agreeable colour and pleasant light to our surroundings. And there should not be black draperies grouped about a drawing-room. I am not converted, or else I might wear a green and yellow bonnet, with a pink-satin cloak, and a sky-blue gown, scarlet shoes and gloves, so as to give bits of agreeable colour to Carnalway Church! . . .

I revere and marvel when I think of your studying whist. I never in my life could learn the mere rudiments of that task. I can't call it a game. I have never yet found myself sitting at a whist-table without wanting to slip down on the floor, "and cry bitterly with loud boo-hoos," as I used to do when Miss de Soyers¹ rubbed out my long-division sum, and gave it to me to do over again. I have watched other people playing it, and observed the anguish of their faces—much worse than is shown by mourners at a funeral. And at the end of every rubber what recriminations and reproaches! It does seem to me a most joyless function; and yet how people—and really clever people too—belove it. I think there is a Whist-demon that bewitches them.

[To Miss YOUNG, who had been visiting in the
Hebrides]

BRANNOXTOWN, *August 24th*, 1893.
FEAST OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

Your last letter from Canna was delightful. It must have been truly joyous to be there. But how

[¹ Mrs. La Touche's governess in 1829-33.]

does it feel to be back again in entirely different surroundings? Tell me more of the Atlantic outside Tíree and Coll.

I return "Mentics."¹ It is quite ingenious, and is an expansion of the old system of object-lessons, with a cabinet full of objects, that cost much more than 7s. 6d., which is, I see, the price of the "Mentic" one. I feel sure the old one would not cultivate the perceptions, or rather the senses, as effectively as this one would. It would be amusing to get one and try it at the School on different children. . . . It might brighten dull ones very much (and we have plenty of them), and reveal in them more perceptiveness than one gave them credit for. It might be really useful at Earlswood.

Well, we are here still, but the move is near. All Mr. Beckett's men departed on Saturday, and the Architect spent hours with Mr. La Touche over papers, inspecting, and settling, and unsettling. You know Mr. La Touche's way; he can't rest till all is paid for. . . .

Harristown is a perfect bee-hive now, of fussing people. I don't like bees. I prefer nice useless butterflies.

There are too a great many agonies. . . . Difficulties about hot-water. I thought we were in it, up to our ears. However, it seems decreed that

[¹ This refers to a little book I sent her on the "Cultivation of the Senses." With the book went a cabinet of tests, very ingenious, but too cumbersome for school use. Years afterwards we tried to get the cabinet for the benefit of the great-grandson at Harristown and failed. So it could not have succeeded as a factor in education.]

we are to take possession next week. But it will be many days more before we can give any one a bed, even Ernest. Dear, kind Nobody will have to be our only guest for some time. He does not want a bed. Nor does he want basins and jugs, tea-cups and dinner-plates, of all of which an insufficiency was saved at the fire.

Judging by the trunks that are going backwards and forwards, one would think we were emigrating to New Zealand.

Tell me everything ; especially about the Twins,¹ and the Atlantic, and its moods. . . .

[First letter from New Harristown]

September 1893.

My soul is down in my boots to-day, and was far lower down yesterday (I do hate the new house). Never shall I forget the move. I was all alone, as Mr. La Touche chose to go to Dublin for the day. I meant to go too. But then decided I would stay, and watch the flitting. . . . Flitting indeed ! that word doesn't express the movement !

I walked from Brannoxtown here about 11.30, really evicted from my comfy chair by the servants, who were, bit by bit, taking away all the furniture. Our biggest cart made nine journeys.

Here I found wild confusion, so I betook myself to the garden where peace reigned. . . .

[¹ The daughters of Mr. Thom, of Canna, Argyllshire, N.B., who had been my pupils some years before, and in whom Mrs. La Touche took the greatest interest.]

At what ought to be Luncheon-time I came in and ascended to my big dreary bedroom, which was in faultless order, and there I found some sandwiches, and a bit of cake provided. Perhaps ravens flew in at the window.

I sat with a book till, at tea-o'clock, my maid brought me a sort of tea. There I remained (wishing myself back at Brannoxtown in my arm chair) till dark. . . . Then I descended and found that order reigned, but it was bleak and bare.

When the "Master" came home he was so pleased at being back I had to try hard not to be a kill-joy or a wet-blanket. We dine on an acre of table, in a square mile of room—for so it seems after the cottage.

I could not sleep one wink. Everything smelt like the cabin of a new ship; and in addition there was the smell of new blankets. . . . I felt like a wriggling insect in the middle of a huge empty cocoa-nut.

Now we have breakfasted, and the Master (with unusual brevity) read a joyful psalm, and gave thanks for our being here again. Well, I can't rise to that. I'd have been so thankful to have been left where I was. . . . However, all is not lost. Mrs. Yorke¹ will come for a few days on Wednesday, and she always harmonises discords. . . . Another good thing is, Rathsallagh Fair has provided me with a most perfect match for the chestnut carriage-horse—so perfect, we can't tell t'other from which.

[¹ Mr. La Touche's cousin.]



Photo, A. Werner

JOHN LA TOUCHE. 1893

[To MRS. O'CONNOR MORRIS]

HARRISTOWN, *January 27th, 1894.*

MY DEAR GEORGIE,—I received your welcome letter yesterday, and the *Academy* has just arrived. I read Willy's¹ letter with much interest. I think it very good indeed. He shows a just appreciation, both of the "Two Noble Ladies" and of their biographer. Unfortunately I have not a single letter of Lady Waterford's. As a rule I never keep letters. I had a good many of hers, but none of them were as interesting as those published by Mr. Hare. Still I am very sorry now that I did not keep them. Our correspondence was more about pictures and art in general than anything else.

She was a wonderful being. "There is none like her, none." It was the perfect harmony and correspondencé (co-ordination is, I believe, the word) of her soul, her intellect, and her body that was so striking. One sees many beautiful women, and distinguished ones too, but there are always some little discrepancies or contradictions, perhaps a want of sweetness of speech and manners, perhaps an *excess* of it; often a carelessness about trifles, or a disregard of others' tastes and wishes. But in Lady Waterford all was harmonious. Her very clothes seemed to express, as it were, the outer presence of a beautiful soul.

She was the most unworldly woman I ever knew. I don't think she could even understand a worldly

[¹ Mrs. La Touche's cousin, Judge O'Connor Morris.]

ambition or motive. She did not despise fashion, she simply ignored it.

Mr. Hare's description of her at Highcliffe and Ford Castle is admirable and accurate. I well remember the little table—with its very bright lamp, and the glass of water and box of colours—at which she used to sit all the evening, drawing while she talked.

As for the change in her religious opinions, I need not tell you I had nothing to do with that, and could not have had, though Lady Stuart-de-Rothsay names me in connection with it.

I never saw Lady Canning, nor heard much about her in her lifetime. Caroline Burke¹ told me the other day she had heard Lord C—— say that "Char Canning was the best woman he had ever known." I think a not good man is often a particularly good judge of excellence in a woman. It is said that Lady Canning was sorely tried by her husband, who was not very kind to her, though he reformed after a time. If this is true, it makes her brave devotion all the more beautiful.

I think Willy has written an admirable ending to his article. I hope Society will feel it.

[*From* AUGUSTUS HARE *to* MISS R., on reading the above:—

"Many thanks for letting me see the enclosed, which quite delights me. It is so graphic and entirely true. I did not know Mrs. La Touche was alive. Lady Waterford so often spoke of her in the earlier years at Ford."]

[¹ Daughter of Sir John Burke of Marble Hill, Galway, and cousin of Mrs. La Touche.]

[To MRS. O'CONNOR MORRIS]

1894.

Thank you very much for sending me Mr. Hare's letter. I feel much flattered and deeply interested. I do not at all mind being looked upon as dead. As far as Society is concerned I am as dead as Queen Anne. I should like very much to make Mr. Hare's acquaintance by some lucky chance. But as for asking him to Harristown, he would not thank me for beguiling him into this Bœotia. My husband has grown old and deaf, and has got into ways of his own which would not suit strangers. He is active enough, and fusses about the place all day, but is very tired in the evening, and goes to bed early. Naturally, I have adapted my life to all this, and it suits me particularly well. . . .

If I go to Dublin the first thing I shall do will be to look for Lily's¹ drawings. I hope they will be hung, and I wish her "more power."

[To MISS YOUNG]

HARRISTOWN [1894].

Nora² is kindly allowing me to write a letter this morning until she tells me to stop! Ernest³

[¹ Miss E. O'Connor-Morris.]

[² Nora was a white collie left at Harristown by Mr. La Touche's grandson, and much beloved there. No chronicle of Harristown would be complete that did not include a mention of all the pets. Liffey, the "Master's" smooth-coated retriever, whose memory was kept green as long as Mr. La Touche lived; Bruno, Rose's dog; Billy and Prinny, whose barking made life a burden; Victor, so spoilt, and whose refusal to live at Harristown on the arrival of a beautiful Persian cat, Luna, made a record in canine ingratitude.]

[³ Captain Ward, Mrs. La Touche's grandson.]

brought us her pedigree, and says he means to show her at the next Dog Show. (How she will hate that!) Her ancestors all seem to be champions. All her relatives are in the Kennel-Book, or dog-peerage. All the same she makes my life a burden to me, and I am thankful when she is asleep, as at present. If I was to move from one chair to another she would in one instant be all over the place—asking me what I was about, whether I had not a bone on the writing-table, or a dead rabbit among my books?

She likes her rabbits dead, otherwise she's afraid of them! The other day a mouse ran across in front of her, and she shrank back in abject terror, worthy of —. She does not mind meeting one chicken, but if two or three appear together she turns tail.

We have never seen her running after any living thing. How well she would protect sheep from wolves!! . . . Thank goodness, Nora has remembered that it is her dinner-hour, and has ordered me to open the door for her. She always goes to the housekeeper's room for her very ample meals. I am not going to have plates about on the floor, ever, any more! She is more intelligent, and more sensitive than any dog I ever belonged to. But thereby she leads me a terrible life. When you come here which would you rather find, me and no Nora, or Nora and no me? . . .

HARRISTOWN, 1894.

The latter bit of my letter to Lady Waterford is in the "Two Noble Lives," I think, at page 80



FOUR GENERATIONS, 1894

MR. LA TOUCHE
MRS. J. HOTHAM
(Granddaughter)

MRS. LA TOUCHE
C. E. HOTHAM
(Great-grandson)

MR. PERCY LA TOUCHE
(Son)



of the 2nd Volume. I have the book and could easily go and look if I were not—what I never intended to be again—in bondage to a dog! Thank goodness, Nora is quiet for a wonder, and asleep at my feet. If I were to move she would begin a wild dance, and implore me to take her for a walk, and never settle down again this side of luncheon. You may say what you like, but the presence of a dog, even a collie dog, hampers one's life very much. We *always* meant Nora to live downstairs with Gordon,¹ but she just won't. She is rather big and rough-coated for a drawing-room dog. If one moves she begins to bounce about.

When she gets on one's nerves, and one reproves her, there comes such a divine despair into her face that she makes one think oneself a Mrs. Herod. She really can express more joys and agonies with her tail, ears, and eyes, than Sara Bernhardt can with her whole person. A dramatic dog takes a great deal out of one.

.

Later.

You ask if Nora is to remain? Ernest has not yet revealed his intentions; though I have represented to him that she would be much more his dog here, where he can see her when he wants to, than if he took her to England.

He says she is too much petted and spoilt here; and gets no discipline or teaching. I said he could arrange with the keeper for her to "read" with him so many hours a day, and attend "rabbit classes" with

[¹ A dog belonging to the servants.]

Bramble and Violet, the keeper's dogs. The Master still thinks Nora's face is like old Liffey's. If he didn't, I do not think Nora would be here! Lady Macbeth would not kill Duncan, you know, because she said he was like "my father as he slept." So Nora's resemblance to the beloved and departed Liffey (quite imaginary) entitles her to a residence among us for the present.

[*Note*.—Nora died of distemper a few weeks after this letter was written.]

DUBLIN, [*March*] 12th, 1895.

We are having dreadfully cold weather, many degrees of frost last night. What a hold winter has taken of us this year! I had hoped St. Valentine would banish him: now I place my hopes on St. Patrick.

I am ever so much better; and am very happy and comfortable. I like being here in winter, much better than being anywhere else, strange as it may seem. I could not get on at any English place now; and I feel my doctor and Mrs. H—— are putting me in thorough repair.

I really think I love Mrs. H—— (the word is too often profaned for me to profane it). We have long consultations on things, principles and peoples. She is a fine character; selfless, large minded, and large hearted. And she has plenty of the "Enthusiasm of Humanity," more, indeed, than any one I've ever met, and above all her Schott-System is doing me real good.

I had a visit from the Rector,¹ and we talked

[¹ Canon Somerville-Large.]

about Zoroaster. I lent him Mr. Balfour's book, and he lent me an equally tough one, "A Modern Zoroastrian," by S. Laing. I've been stretching my brain very much lately—but to understand Mr. Balfour one needs to have gone through a long course of mental philosophy, and be familiar with a good many lines of thought and argument, of which some of us have never heard.

I get on better with the Zoroastrian, as I have had a certain amount of training for the kind of thoughts and ideas it expresses. Now really Isis and Osiris are a good deal more interesting than William and Mary, or the much married Henry VIII. And Ormuzd and Ahriman are much better worth reading about than Pitt or Fox!

Read my cousin Judge O'Connor-Morris' book. It is not stupid; and, being historical as well as political, would be sure to interest you. It is called "Thoughts and Memories." It contains mention of a certain Maria Price, and descriptions of pre-historic days at Desart!

I've been bored by reading "A Gentleman of France,"¹ which the *Spectator* praised so much. I do hate a historical novel worse than plain history. If I must swallow a dose don't give it to me buttered and sugared.

[¹ By Stanley Weyman.]

[*To the* RECTOR OF CARNALWAY]HARRISTOWN, *Friday* (July 1897).

MY DEAR MR. LARGE,¹—On mature reflection I can't bring myself to sign the address. I am sure you will find many better Protestants willing to do so.

I do not think the Queen should be addressed in the matter: she has no power to make or alter laws. A petition to Parliament would be the right course, and it should not be exclusively from women. If women are in difficulties and dangers, it is the part of *men* to arise and legislate for their protection: and let the wives and sisters of men do the best they can in the way of quiet influence.

I am sure that Government inspection would be considered a great insult by the conventual authorities, including their Bishops. There are no doubt abuses, and perhaps cases of ill-treatment, but so there are in households and families. We do not have our nurseries and school-rooms invaded and inspected because Mrs. Montague killed her child.

I have only this moment received a letter from a friend who had been visiting her sister, a cloistered nun. She says: "They have such happy, serene faces, those nuns, so unmarked by care or trouble! Do they have the best of it in this world and in the next, I kept asking myself."

However that may be, I don't feel that I ought to sign the memorial. Perhaps the spirits of my

[¹ This letter was written on being asked to sign a petition to Queen Victoria insisting on the Inspection of Convents.]

grandmother, and of my R. C. godfather, may be restraining me.—Yours very sincerely,

MARIA LA TOUCHE.

However that maybe, I don't feel that I ought to sign the memorial — Perhaps the spirits of my grandmother, & of my R. C. godfather, maybe restraining me.

Yrs very sincerely

Maria Touche

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

Oct. 27th, 1898.

It was a joy to see your handwriting again, dearest Joanie; and joys are scarce at this time of year.

I have become exceedingly stupid, and write

with some difficulty. Sometimes I can't find the right words, but this is not the case to-day.

It was kind of you to send us the information about the garden-seats, and we have got the catalogue; but I am afraid I weigh twice as much as St. C., so if I am to go about in a wheeled-thing the ass that draws it must have four legs or be a Shetland pony. Soon I fear I must come down to something of the kind.¹ At present I can walk, with neither dignity nor grace, as far as the garden. . . .

Next week we move to the Shelbourne, where I undergo the Nauheim treatment under Sir Philip Smyly's eye, and have "wrestling matches" with a powerful pupil of Dr. Schotts. All this does me a world of good.

Dublin is not Paradise, but I have a few friends, relations, and acquaintances who come to see me. I also find very congenial society in the Zoo. My doctor gets admission for me to its more exclusive circles, unknown to the Public. I am quite looking forward to an introduction to two haughty reserved lionesses who each have a litter of cubs. One of these ladies attends to her own family, the other has engaged a red Irish setter as wet nurse. There is also my dear Tommy, a chimpanzee, the image of Mr. ——. He is beginning to know me, and greets me with an enormous smile, and a rapid succession of winks. I like him, and so does his keeper, but no one else. . . .

[¹ A donkey called Fan was added to the establishment in the spring of 1899, and, like all the four-footed things at Harristown, quickly became a personal friend.]

The Master has become ten years younger than me, though by the calendar he is ten years older. He is out in all weathers, planting and building and overlooking his beloved cattle and sheep, &c. He never will put on an overcoat. He is very deaf, and trying to hear conversation gives him bad headaches. Trying to talk much gives me a cough ; so we are rather a silent pair, but lively all the same. . . .

[To MISS BISHOP, now Mrs. Hubert Burke ; but of the hundreds of letters to Mrs. and Miss Bishop, only those that follow have been preserved]

HARRISTOWN, *March 1900.*

Dublin is boiling over with loyalty mixed with the wildest foolishness. Every municipal teacup has got a storm in it. . . .

Who is to present the keys of the City ? Where is it to be done ? The Queen¹ must go through Sackville Street, because she can never have seen such a beautiful street in her life. . . . No, she must go by the Quays, because it is the direct way, and the inhabitants expect the sight, &c. I believe the Queen will arrive before one thing is settled.

Ernest departs on Tuesday next. He has got transferred to Major de Burgh's division. I don't like it at all ; but still I approve, and would not stop him if I could. I wish there was no war, and there

[¹ Queen Victoria paid a visit to Ireland in April 1900. Before all was settled as to her reception, there was an unusual amount of fuss and heart-burning, even for Ireland.]

will be a black cloud over my heart while he is gone and this war lasts.¹

[To MISS FRIEDREICHs]

April 17th, 1900.

Your visit was a great pleasure to us all . . . and you have more than reconciled us as to the length of Cat Phillis' nose, which we thought was too long and a defect. But as to her hollow sides and narrow body, we think it a proof of her ancient ancestry. She "throws back," as tortoise-shell or yellow cats are supposed to do, to the Egyptian wild-beast type, and typical feline form, flat bodied and narrow as seen in the tiger. Our domestic cats are a very mixed race. Yours probably throws back to the native British cat, a round-faced, round-bodied creature, grey or striped.

Here it rains and blows nearly every day, and we can't sow corn or plant potatoes. . . .

I am very sorry for — ; she makes her position more and more painful by thinking the worst of everybody, resenting imaginary neglect, and finding plots and conspiracies and wicked schemes that never existed, nor could exist. I do think social prejudices (I mean a respect for them) and a desire of social success—that hollow unreality, that bubble that a word can't prick—lead to nothing but misery and mortification, and take all the sweetness and light out of life.

[¹ Her grandson had volunteered for South Africa.]

[To Miss BISHOP]

HARRISTOWN, 29th Jan. 1901.

A cold bright day, hard frost ; windows at early morning covered with silver workmanship of ferns and pines, lovely to behold. I do hate the cold, but I must admit that it is good for me.

I certainly am much stronger and cough less in this disciplinary sort of weather than in the soft muggy damp which I prefer. Snowdrops are out under the big beech, and a blackbird with a beak of lovely red gold is dancing about with his tail cocked. And everything has its sharp shadow—our earthly recognition of Sunshine.

The world looks lovely from the windows ; brown tracery of tree-tops against the sky of intense blue, and the river, full of lights and darks, reflections and spangles of white foam.

I am always thankful for the outside things ! . . . I was rather horrified to receive a visitor the other day, in a coat made of Mole-skins ! And now I am told that I am quite behind the times, and a mole-skin coat is the very latest fashion. I wanted much to tell the wearer that the mole is the farmer's friend, and would be his (and her) instructor if he or she were capable of receiving instruction. We have no moles in Ireland, but I am sure St. Patrick never made the mistake of banishing them.

To me it is a horrid thought that, now-a-days, fine ladies, callous and ignorant of Nature's laws and ways, choose to have these little creatures slaughtered by the thousand to make them coats.

They don't know, and don't care to know, that the mole feeds on wire-worms, the larvæ of the daddy-long-legs, and other destroyers of our grain-crops; nor that he lightens and ventilates and pulverises the underground soil with his wonderful galleries, and top-dresses the turfy pastures with his cast-up heaps of dry earth. His methods are a lesson in the principles of cultivation. Though his purpose is only to serve his own innocent ends.

THE SHELBOURNE, Jan. 1901.

You tell me you are hungering to know the things of God, but not the things of Mr. Stead. What I feel is, that we can no more *know* the things of God than a baby in long-clothes can know the laws of the solar-system. But we can *think* about such things, and read, and observe, the views of other people. And Mr. Stead's are as likely to be true as Mr. Hutton's.

I don't hunger a bit for what I know myself unable to eat or digest, but I like to pick up a crumb now and then under spiritual dinner-tables, when nobody knows I am there.

I am unhappy about S. Africa: 5000 more Imperial Yeomanry are to be raised. Ernest's Company is advancing against the Boers in a column with the Coldstreams, and a battery of R.H.A., under General Settle, whoever he may be. It makes us very anxious. . . .

I would love to see that man who feeds the birds. I'd give anything to have his mysterious power. What a joy it would be if I could sit down

by the river and call all the big and little birds, the rabbits and the squirrels, to come and walk and peck and scratch all over me, the tall heron even walking to me through the water to eat out of my pocket! *That* would be a dinner party I should really enjoy! The "Meeneu" would be—

Miettes à la Jardinière
Petits pois à la Colombière
Graisse de Pré Sale
(à la Tomtit)
Filets de truites à la Grue
Nóisettes à l'Écureuil.

What a delicious impossibility.¹

THE SHELBOURNE HOTEL, DUBLIN, *April* 1901.

What a lot of people, and what a variety of talks! Acute mania would be my disease if I had to spend one of your days.

I do not see why "Military talk" should be narrow. Where does the narrowness come in? I think the interest of England, "my Mother," and the fact that her sons are also ours, is quite wide enough a subject for any of us. The changes at the War Office are deeply interesting; we cannot take our eyes off our "far-flung battle line" just now. These things are quite well worth talking about.

But, seriously, . . . your last letter was rather sad, and in one of your statements I do not go with

[¹ This letter is in answer to one of Miss Bishop's describing the feeding of the birds in Hyde Park, every morning, by a man who had most wonderful powers of taming the little birds, so that they alighted on him and walked on his arms and head.]

you. You say the books most attractive to us are those that reflect our own experience and what we have mostly met in life. Now, I find that such books make me rather sick and depressed. Certainly they deepen depression if it is already there.

It is unhealthy and decadent to revel in sorrow and "squirm" in squirming literature. For myself I like books as far outside my own experience as possible. I like a quite strange and new picture of life, not a mirror of things I have seen and done; still less of agonies I have felt. I do not want a vibration set up within me saying this or that is so. I like to be lifted off my plane and put on quite a different one, whether higher or lower.

Ruskin says in one of his books¹ something to the effect—that one should not read the books that make one say "that's what I always thought, or felt," but those that make one say "this is something I never knew or thought of."

I am sure that strong, breezy, happy people do exist—though, of course, I don't mean that they have no sorrows. I try to be strong, happy, and breezy myself, and I am not quite unsuccessful. For all the love and sympathy I have had (and lost) in the past I am perfectly thankful to have had it all, and could never say I was worse off than if I had never known it. The good of it remains if the joy of it is over. There are Memory gardens in one's soul, full of flowers and fruit, and green resting-places. And there one can wander and linger with something like enjoyment, though there

[¹ From "Kings' Treasures"—"Sesame and Lilies,"]

may be a grave at every turn. "That's my think"
—as my great-grandson says.

HARRISTOWN, *June* 1901 (?).

Yesterday was lovely for sitting under the beeches, and we found it hot. Rose¹ came over and told us of her experiences at Glen Imaal the day before. She and some other ladies of the Battery went at very short notice. The Duke² announced that he would come and inspect the last day's shooting, and would bring the Duchess and his daughters.

The shooting, and the galloping guns over rocks and mountains, with shells bursting in the air, &c., were very interesting, and all these ladies—Royal and otherwise—seem to have rushed and flown about, climbing kopjes, and running up and down slopes of slippery turf, till the poor Duchess³ fell and sprained her ankle. It was a terrible moment, as the pain was great; no men were at hand to help, and no water. However, the sufferer soon pulled herself together, showed real pluck (my favourite virtue) and endurance, and went through the luncheon, and (a much worse thing) the long rough drive out of the Glen to Dunlavin. To me it seems one would have to be about sixteen, and very strong, to enjoy such an expedition. . . .

Haymaking is in full swing; and the "holidays of obligation" which your Church insists on are

[¹ Mrs. J. Hotham, Mrs. La Touche's granddaughter, then living at Newbridge, County Kildare.]

[² Of Connaught.]

[³ Of Connaught.]

a serious inconvenience. No, indeed! If last Saturday had been the Feast of St. Calvin and St. Spurgeon instead of St. Peter and St. Paul, the "Master" would have been just as angry; and being himself a sort of POPE, he would have forbidden its being observed! However, now all goes well with the hay, and the one good wet day we had last week rejoiced the heart of the turnips, and the ears of the corn. . . .

Do you believe in the stories in the *Spectator* about people being in two places at once? Couldn't you come here now and then without leaving London? Or could I go over to you, and "sit" for "company" without getting off my beautiful new Chesterfield sofa?

HARRISTOWN, *March* 1902.

We are very anxious about Annie.¹ She is very ill, and now another "opinion" is to be got from Dublin. Miss Young seems to spend all her days at Newberry, which seriously disoblges the Master, as at this time of year he has endless writing to do.

. . . This is a bright day (outside) after a wet night, and the river is in flood. Here the crocuses and snowdrops are in full bloom, making a brilliant carpet of gold and silver under the black trees in the way to the garden, and the daffodil-buds are swelling in their paper parcels.

Nobody slept last night because Phillis, the cat, was lost. Miss Young was one monument of woe,

[¹ Lady Annette La Touche had a very serious illness at this time.]

and the Master was another. Every place was searched, and we said good-night to each other with lumps in our throats. She arrived, however, at breakfast-time, and our joy was unbounded. It is wonderful how an amiable and confiding little cat, with soft topaz eyes, can make itself beloved.

Read "The Soul of a Cat" by Miss Benson. It is a sympathetic and accurate study of cat-character, and dog-character too. Cats are selfish and fond of luxury, and seldom have much affection for persons, but they have winning, coaxing ways; they purr, and their movements are a study of grace, really the poetry of motion.

I do not think one loves creatures for the sake of the love one gets from them. Even in the matter of affection it is more blessed to give than to receive. Wordsworth says "We live by admiration, hope, and love."¹ He does not mean by being the objects of these sentiments, but the subject of them.

HARRISTOWN, *September 1902.*

I am deeply interested about the French nuns,² and I should like to embrace the officer who was cashiered for refusing to evict them. Why can't public things be done gently and by degrees? I don't approve of nuns teaching; I never did. Couldn't there be a law, both civil and ecclesiastical, that nuns should do nothing but pray, and help the poor and the sick? Perhaps hold classes for

[¹ "The Excursion," Book IV.]

[² This refers to the first trouble between the Church and the State in France.]

needlework and cookery, but not teach anything else. . . .

French ideas assert themselves so violently, I sometimes begin to think France is the Devil's own kingdom. I see the track of his cloven foot on most of the things that are held up for our admiration as "so French."

Of course I know there are many saints among the sinners. What does M. de Mun¹ think?

I've been much in the garden lately, but to-day there is absolutely no weather at all. A grey sky, no wind, and the world fast asleep. The garden is deeply interesting, but any day we may expect to find all the proud big flowers dead corpses, like the army of Sennacherib. My household is certainly over head and ears in fuss, and my room must be beflowered and bedizened for the arrival of Rose² and her daughter. Angela will be seven months old on the 7th. The people are all keen to see our latest and remotest descendant. . . .

A sad brown carpet is forming itself under every tree, and the woods are all mottled with varied tints of dying green, and dead-brown and russet. But the big gay dahlias, begonias, and zinnias keep up their blaze of colour.

It will soon be all over. I suppose my Mother Nature can't do wrong, but to me she's a little cruel. She is breaking up and locking up all my toys. She cuffs and buffets with her cold east wind. She will be quite good next year—but *I* may not be there. . . .

[¹ Count Albert de Mun, politician and reformer. He was nephew (maternally) of Mrs. Craven, authoress of *Le Récit d'une Sœur*.]

[² Mrs. John Hotham.]

HARRISTOWN, *September 1902.*

Well, I am with you as to the nonsensicality of dressing out of the fashion on purpose. It's conceited and impertinent to do that. My own idea is—do not oppose fashions, but don't think about it at all. Dress, on the whole, like most other people, but don't buy a thing because it is the *dernier cri*, and unless you are a Frenchwoman don't try to look like one. . . . What is good taste and quite right for some people is bad taste and quite wrong for others. So do not let us ape any person or nation.

Yes, I would follow the French in some of their economies of food, particularly peasants' food. They are an example in that, and our poor people are as wrong and mistaken there as they can be. But somehow clothes and head-coverings seem to me as if they ought to be a sort of outcome of our own individual souls and minds. . . .

We had a long drive yesterday on out-of-the-way roads, behind Canny Court towards Hollywood. The hedges were perfectly fascinating and full of brilliant colours. Specklings and spanglings of black and white amid the green and gold and russet of the leafage; blackberries, sloes, snow-berries, and every shade of scarlet and crimson on the hawthorn and briars, with lovely big ferns below them. The upland pastures, no longer green, were pale bluish-purple with the small blue scabious, and had a golden embroidery of rag-weed.

The weather is lovely, but one feels that autumn has arrived.

One good thing, the cook has made out of the

wild crab apples the loveliest delicious jelly—clear as glass, and the colour like the crimson robe of a saint in an old stained glass window.

The maids are all going out blackberrying to-day for blackberry jelly. Well, I suppose it's low and greedy to be more interested in "confitures" than in "confections."

As yesterday, we drove to Nowhere, and called on darling Nobody. To-day I'll go with Fan's carriage to the garden. . . .

When we came home last week Cat Phillis's joy was really astonishing, and the maids described her misery and lamentations while we were in Dublin. She lost all interest in mice—she sat by Miss Young's door, or in my chair, making piteous noises and never a purr. Then, when she heard the carriage arrive, she darted downstairs, and made such pathetic demonstrations of joy and love as I never saw in any animal; no bouncing, no outcry, but the tenderest soft pats and strokes with clawless little paws, rubbing herself all over each one of us by turns, gazing into our faces with "love in her luminous eyes," and purring like a small steam-engine.

HARRISTOWN, *Oct. 8th*, 1902.

. . . I do not believe every one is born good, because the facts of life prove the contrary; and as for "lawyers," "precautions," and "receipts," I too, as well as Herbert Spencer,¹ can "comment"

[¹ Miss Bishop had sent us "Facts and Comments," by Herbert Spencer, with her comment that she did not entirely agree with him. Hence the discussion.]

on the existence of those facts. They have nothing to do with "suspicion," in the real sense of the word. It is not suspecting any one to accept the proved fact that there is always a percentage of human beings who will cheat and steal if temptation is left in their way; nor is it suspicion to guard against mistakes and forgetfulness, and to avoid strifes and disputes. There is a much larger percentage of human beings who are careless and forgetful than you would believe. Affairs would get into an utter muddle if receipts for money were not taken, and transfers of property, wills, leases, &c., drawn up in legal form, to guard against errors as well as fraud. If these were not done, real suspicions would arise in all directions; things would go wrong, and get lost, and people would blame and suspect one another, when a scrap of paper would make all clear. I am quite sure, if Herbert Spencer was selling or buying a property, he would see that all legal forms were carried out. . . . I've read things about H. Taine, and I might perhaps like his letters, but I've grown very tired of people and their memoirs. I am not sufficiently anxious to "get to the real man or woman," as you say, though I admit that one gets that best through their letters if there are plenty of them written to different sorts of people. I do not care to read a long correspondence between Messrs. X and Y, who are unknown to me. I should like (if I had the brains) to read about things and ways, inventions, and discoveries in science; and I would much rather people told me what they found, than what they thought.

HARRISTOWN, Oct. 13th, 1902.

We have made Rose read "Facts and Comments," and she has been much interested, and we've discussed it well. You are not with Herbert Spencer on the subject of taking receipts for money, and employing lawyers, or tying up property with deeds and documents. He plainly states that all this ought to be tightly done, and every possible chance of cheating guarded against. What he blames (and rightly) is one's inconsistency in being ready to trust directors of companies, and auditors of accounts, and not taking the same precautions about them as we do about other business transactions. . . . I've got a burden on my brain, therefore this is not a letter. The proposed Conference¹ between the sheep and the goats, loyal and disloyal, is the one topic of the moment. Mr. La Touche's head is full of it, and he is emptying it into mine, and wants me to help him with a letter to the *Times*. I've also got into correspondence with Willie.² We are all of one mind in the matter, and we like telling each other so.

HARRISTOWN, Dec. 1902.

Yes, people are talking about M'Carthy's book,³ but the real good Catholics have not read it. It would be much more forcible if the author could

[¹ The Conference arranged by Lords Dunraven and Mayo took place soon after this date.

[² Judge O'Connor Morris.]

[³ "Priests and People," by Michael M'Carthy.]

have refrained from expressing so much spite, and always making a point of putting the worst possible construction upon every doubtful fact in which a priest is implicated. But, there is no doubt that the priests in Ireland are going too far, and have fingers and thumbs in every pie. They are also much too numerous in proportion to the population.

THE SHELBOURNE HOTEL, DUBLIN, Dec. 1902.

. . . About men, women, and gossip. No, I have never been in club rooms, nor have I been in Martinique, yet I *believe* there is a volcano there that erupted lately,¹ and I have always had plenty of proof that most of the serious and damaging gossip that goes about originates in the haunts of *men*. If I ask a woman how she came by such and such a story she generally tells me her husband or her brother heard it at his club or in his friend's smoking-room. I have known heaps of men *dans le temps* who were most dangerous gossips when they got a chance. . . . Men forget what is said and done. Women remember; but the difference is that a woman has sympathies, and knows what will and what will not make mischief, and therefore does not make it unless she is cruel and means to do so. Men don't care, and don't think, and blurt out things they have not yet forgotten. No *kind* woman does this.

We are getting on well here, and are very

[¹ Mrs. La Touche refers to the eruption of Mont Pelée, which did such terrible damage in Martinique a few months before.]

sociable and social, and I was so glad to see Emily,¹ who came on her way to Lyons.

To-day all the forces of winter seem to be asleep; the sky is pale grey, with spaces of very pale blue. The Wicklow hills are a thin wash of neutral tint; the bare trees in the Green are quite motionless, while the swans, black and white, are sitting on their reflections on the calm water. Nothing moves except the sea-gulls flying round and round, and nothing shows colour but the vividly green turf of the lawns. As I sit here I can't see down upon the "traffic," or the people and their wonderful clothes. One hears noises occasionally but one's eyes are comforted with sky and distance, and the lovely flight of the sea-gulls is an endless entertainment.

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Well, I do *not* see the reasonableness of T. W. Russell's bill.² It may be marching forward in one sense, but it is all the same a retrograde movement. We who live in Ireland see the evil results to all the interests of the country and the people, of the measure of Home Rule and Local Government already given. I don't think any civilised country is as unfit as Ireland for a peasant proprietary, or in need of having its local interests in the hands of an educated and loyal class. I do not think they will love England any better when Government is their landlord! It is a very

[¹ The Hon. E. Lawless.]

[² In answer to a letter of Miss Bishop's praising as "reasonable" a new Land Act for Ireland, introduced by Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P.]

bad thing for Ireland that the religious antipathy should be so embittered. That is on the increase, and one can't see the reason of it, for truly the Protestants don't interfere. One has only to read the newspaper reports of the Poor Law Guardians all over the country to see what serious mischief is going on. I am afraid M'Carthy's book¹ reveals the key of the solution. And yet they allow themselves to be misled by Protestant demagogues, tho' they refuse to be cured by Protestant doctors. You will see and hear a good deal when you come. May it be soon.

SHELBOURNE HOTEL, Jan. 9, 1903.

My absurd cold has left me with very little strength, not certainly enough to do any "resisted movements."² The poker and the teapot have grown frightfully heavy, but my brains are clear to-day, and I am to help the "Master" write a long letter to the Press, all about the state of this country, *according to his views*. He has brought me three sheets of blots and confusion, wisdom and common sense, for me to put in order and copy. And I've done it, now. . . .

Well, about fashion and progress. We all know how things are changing, and I contend that those know most and judge best who are out of the dust of the arena, and they don't talk, and are not talked to. Nothing muddles thought, and confuses opinion, as much as *talk* with collusions and colloquings of many tongues among irresponsible people. In the thick of a crowd no one sees

[¹ "Priests and People."]

[² Part of the Nauheim cure.]

or hears aright; all is crumbs and snippets and details. Perspective and proportion, and the true movement and drift of affairs can't be seen or felt. The battle and the tactics become intelligible to the sentinel on the hill, who looks on, and keeps quiet in the silence. There are things one must go away from—indeed, live away from to understand properly—all the big things of politics and government. The lesser local things, such as the Irish land question, requires to be looked at more closely and seen in the light of personal experience. But all the world's social and political changes are best understood from afar. Intelligent people, who read and know all that goes on and what the Press has to say, are, I do think, better judges of the position, and of what we are coming to, than people in London who are nearer the movement. I know old landmarks are pushed down by modern progress, but reaction comes and the old way is revived. History shows this.

My cousin (Mrs. La Touche of Bellevue) told us a good story yesterday in illustration of the Irish peasant's constant idea that "What's mine's mine for evermore." Her uncle, Mr. Henn, who lived for years in Mount Street, Dublin, had a pet poor old woman who used to come to him every morning for the tea-leaves left in his teapot. This went on for years. She died, and after a few days his servant told him the old woman had come for the tea-leaves. "Impossible," he said. "She is dead." But the servant persisted. So Mr. Henn went out to the door to see the ghost. It was another old woman.

The first one had solemnly made a will, leaving to her friend the daily dole of the landlord's tea-leaves, as if they were hers by right.

THE SHELBOURNE, *Jan.* 1903.

I am "lost in wonder, love, and praise" at the way you fly about, like Macbeth's witches, through the fog and filthy air (here it is not filthy, as it is sea-fog). London opinions on Irish affairs are hopelessly wide of the mark, and the Saxon is simply rigid with ignorance of what he is talking about. He sees one little corner of the matter, and never sees all round. Without living in Ireland no one can understand the different bearings of proposed measures, or foresee their inevitable results, or even perceive what they really mean. For instance, the truly loyal classes in Ireland would rather meet their fate than join hands with the Nationalists who tried to insult the late Queen, and make a boast of having nothing to say to the Coronation.

As they are always screaming treason we can hold no parley with them, and we despise the landlords who do. Even here we know that the Conference was not *bonâ-fide*. The article about it in last week's *Spectator* had some sense in it, but showed benighted ignorance in accepting the fiction that a few rebel M.P.'s represented the tenants, and a few renegade persons of quality the landlords. I hope when there is a Senate in Dublin there will be about 10 per cent. of doctors among the senators to mend the broken heads. It can never be like

the old Irish Parliament, such as O'Connell would have liked to restore. He, by the way, was absolutely loyal to the Crown; and we could have touched *him* without tongs.

[Mr. La Touche very ill at this time]

HARRISTOWN, *Jan.* 30, 1903.

Yes, we have been both anxious and unhappy; and though Mr. La Touche is better and now free from pain, it's not all right with him yet; and he is very restless and weak, certainly not the better for having begun to "take notice" and "want to know about things." This gives both Miss Young and myself endless writing, and has left me to-day with no wits at all. The nurse is an infinite comfort. I have now had experience of four different hospital nurses, and they have all been "Angels in the House," and felt to be such by every one in it, servants and all. There has never been a hitch or a difficulty. . . .

About anxiety, mine goes down to the very bottom, never to the top of the heap; all the little things that have to be remembered and done, keep on the top. I *never* think of to-morrow—unless it's about sending to the train for something. I have to keep my wits about me. I have no time for forebodings, and can't afford to do anything that would melt and weaken backbone and brains. Nothing does me so much good as sunshine, starlight, the luminous spaces of the sky, the flight of birds, the wind in the trees, &c. All these give

one a sort of sense of infinitude and continuity. I don't think I could bear to be unhappy in a town. *People* say, and do, the wrong thing; and often their sympathy scratches one. The outside-Nature things don't sympathise, but they strengthen and support; at least they seem to do so to me. . . .

You must keep the "Valley of Decision"¹ for your own. It won't get tiresome as it goes on, but will get more interesting. It has great merit. I felt that, but it bored me.

HARRISTOWN, *Feb. 6th*, 1903.

I could not write yesterday, but I think Miss Young did. I have not a very clear head; remembering one thing makes me forget another. The "Master's" memory is like a printed record, with pages, and an index. He puts his finger at once on every item, every incident of time and place, in whatever transaction is under consideration at the moment. . . .

Unfortunately the beginning of February is the worst and most businessy time in the whole year. Things fall due, and fall in, and must be "met" or "contested" as the case may be. . . . However, the buds are swelling on my dear elm-tree, and the moon looks at me at night from between the boughs. Stars twinkle when it's a fine night—which is seldom. These things *are* consolation and help, tho' I don't know how or why. Well, it's never too late to get an education in business matters, or in anything else—and I am improving. . . .

[¹ By Edith Wharton.]

As I write there is a poor dear crow squatting among the crocuses under the big beech. When I began this letter he staggered away out of sight, and now he has limped back and laid himself among the crocuses again—to die, I suppose. That's the way I should like to die, but not with people looking at me out of a window. Poor bird! he keeps looking round at the river. A great prosperous magpie has come hopping up to look at him and hopped away without giving him a kind word. I'm so sorry for him, I've got a lump in my throat, but it would kill him with fright if I brought him a restorative. Other crows walk past him like the Priest and the Levite. . . . Now a Samaritan crow has walked up, and sits beside him. No, the Samaritan has pecked and pushed him out, and left him in a cold and bare place. Now he has crawled back to his crocus deathbed. I can't write any more with that tragedy before my eyes.

HARRISTOWN, *March* 1903.

No, I am not so lame now and *can* get in and out of a carriage without much difficulty. I meant to have a drive to-day, but the weather is too bad. . . . I should like to talk to your nephew Cuthbert about his ship. There are occasions when half measures, or even quarter measures, are wiser and more right than whole ones. The whole one may involve more time and more sacrifice than one has any right to give, and the half ones may perfectly achieve the desired purpose. Many a real ship is found to have a slight "list" when she is launched;

—the owner (not being Sir T. Lipton) would not build a new one, but correct the fault with ballast. People sometimes lose sight of the purpose of a thing for the sake of their own almost morbid sense of thoroughness and completeness. For instance, one knits a sock, and discovers a dropped stitch, or a split thread. Undo, and start afresh; because, if one does not, there will be a hole, and the sock will wear out. But if you discover a stitch wrongly “turned,” let it alone; the sock is no worse; why give your time to no purpose?

HARRISTOWN, *March 17th*, 1903.

You were a “Sweet” to send me that most amusing skit.¹ I’ve often wondered how the *Times* could roar and rave as it did about its Ency. Brit.

We live in an age of advertisement and no humility, I was going to say no modesty, and perhaps I might apply that word, even in its popular sense.

Yes, I am lame all over; muscular-rheumatism everywhere. I sit down as if I was a sack of potatoes, and I can’t possibly get up without much difficulty. I have to think much oftener than twice before I make these very painful evolutions to fetch a book or ball of wool. I try to think it’s amusing, but I badly want an intelligent retriever, and for that and other reasons I am very thankful that Miss

[This amusing little book, “Wisdom while we Wait,” a skit on the frantic advertising of the Encyclopædia Britannica, delighted Mrs. La Touche, who always insisted that the *Times’* methods in later years lacked dignity.]

Young comes home on Friday. . . . Yes, I love a wood quite frantically. I could almost say that I owe all that makes me happy, all that taught me what I care to know, all that helped me to hope and endure, to the woodland influences I was reared among. The Wood was church, school, playground, museum, and theatre to me, then a solitary child. But I always had pet trees, personal friends everywhere; and I have them here—the beeches I can see from my bed, and the cedars on the lawn.

The storm spared mine, but felled the "Master's" one great friend—a very big silver-fir.

Is Emily¹ with you? Give her my love. Her poems appeal to my soul so much. Now about "Rycroft."² There are things in it that also appeal to me very much, and others that exasperate me. Of course I see that it is one of those abominable and unfair literary tricks of which the "Love Letters of an Englishwoman"³ set the example. Still it is wonderfully unlike anything George Gissing ever wrote or thought; but being his it must be clever. It's not as true as "Essex in Ireland"⁴—for much of that is true. . . .

"Wisdom, &c.," is delightfully funny and clever.

We have had again a roaring storm, and it is going on still. What can have made the South wind change its character so completely? It has been our only wind for the last six weeks. Perhaps

[¹ The Hon. E. Lawless, who had just published her book, "With the Wild Geese."]

[² "Henry Rye-Croft," by George Gissing.]

[³ "Love Letters of an Englishwoman," by Laurence Housman.]

[⁴ "Essex in Ireland," by Hon. E. Lawless.]

by-and-by we shall have balmy breezes from the North, and warm and delicious East winds! . . .

As for the Land-Bill,¹ all I see is that no one could live in Ireland, *living by the land*, either as landlord or tenant, and not see that it is utterly impossible that the Bill should become law substantially as it stands. Even Mr. Wyndham sees that, and invites amendment and alteration. The Bill will be debated and discussed, and whittled into something that will do no distinct good; and, let us hope, no very great harm! Our cousin Mrs. Yorke writes to me saying, "I do want to know what an Irish landlord thinks of Mr. Wyndham's Bill. People in general praise it, but I have no faith in Saxons—who are, as a rule, stupid or prejudiced." I shall love the heavenly present² you hold out before my large and greedy eyes. It is so good of you. I am a "Grateful" yet slightly a "Reluctant." When I think of the hat, or shoes, or sugar plums, or "ribbons and bibbons," or prayer-books and dictionaries (to say nothing of shares or debentures, or even haberdashery) you might, instead, be buying for yourself!

HARRISTOWN, 21st March, 1903.

I certainly think, like you, that we ought to get as far towards perfection as we can. But we also ought to have a sense of proportion and value, thinking of perfection in the use and economy of time and labour. . . .

[¹ Land Act of 1893, introduced by Mr. Wyndham, Chief Secretary.]

[² An edition of Dante in three vols.]

Everybody is agog about the coming Land-Bill,¹ and the possible change of Government, as well as the Motor-race.² I am still frightened at this diabolical diversion. . . . We Irish ought to feel flattered at Europe having fixed upon our roads as being the best for the purpose; and it will fling a lot of money into empty pockets; but, all the same, I feel it will do more harm than good.

It requires to be quite Irish oneself, or to have lived a long life here, to form any judgment as to the effect things will have on Ireland—the *moral effect* particularly, which is apt to be the exact reverse of what England (and the Continent) would intend and expect. . . .

SHELBOURNE HOTEL, *March 31st, 1903.*

This is only to tell you we are here, very comfortable in our favourite rooms—and at last we have a fine calm day. March has suddenly remembered that he must go out like a lamb, after having been a raging lion for thirty days. He did his worst yesterday—"broke the record,"³ and our skylight at Harristown too; and, alas, threw down a few more trees. All about Belfast, he killed

[¹ Mr. Wyndham's.]

[² In the July of this year the Gordon-Bennett Motor Race was run in Kildare. It was supposed to be a great honour that Irish roads should have been chosen, but those who knew Ireland best had forebodings of accident. Nothing really serious went wrong, however, and we at Harristown enjoyed seeing the preparations for the great day.]

[³ The early spring of 1903 will long be remembered in Ireland for a succession of storms. The first in February did great damage at Harristown, hundreds of trees being blown down, and the one on March 28th was bad enough, doing much damage to the house, as well as to the woods.]

people, wrecked ships, and tore up a good deal of the coast-line of railway. I am glad his reign is at an end. . . . Do rest as much as you can. And don't be an Impetuous and an Eager. Nothing is worth it.

I've read "Lady Rose's Daughter,"¹ and thought it quite excellent, admirably planned and carried out, but . . . an arboreal ape like me would be very uncomfortable among any of those people. I do not sympathise much with Lady Rose's daughter's thoughts and aims. I *could* love Jacob. But why was he given such an ugly name?

We have left off talking about the Land-Bill for the present, but there will be much howling and jabbering when the second reading comes on. . . . What the Government really ought to do (but doesn't dare) is to make a redistribution of seats in Ireland. The over-representation is preposterous, and is said to be at the bottom of a good deal of mischief.

I really am beginning to think I am rather a horrid person—in fact a wild sow (to match the kind of wild boar known in the French Forests as "*le grand vieux solitaire*")—for to me the idea of *People* dotted about among apple-trees and meadows and hills and valleys when I am happily watching birds and butterflies repels me horribly. You would not like, when you are listening with your whole soul to beautiful music, to hear penny whistles and jew's-harps striking up, here and there, across the notes and chords that mean so much to you. One has friends, and one loves to see them,

[¹ By Mrs. Humphry Ward.]

sometimes; but I am a lover of the wild outside things, and I want to be alone with them at times.

All the happiest memories of my life are of long solitary hours among hills and woods, long walks among Highland mountains, up Kopjes, where one could see for miles round, and not one roof or cultivated field (much less a Person) to be seen; and as for not being disappointed in people—I could count on the fingers of one hand the few who have *not* disappointed me. It is as if shoes, that fitted so well, that they helped one to walk, gradually began to pinch one's toes, and rub one's heels, and work nails into one's sole (and soul) till one had to say, "Good-bye, shoes, I can't wear you any more." . . .

HARRISTOWN, *April 1903.*

I am amused at what you say about —— and "Who's Who," and "Have you dined with the So and So's?" &c. &c. You say these things pall and become uninteresting as one gets older. My experience is that they exasperate one to madness when one is young. To me all that sort of thing, all social ambitions, were as red rags to a bull in my youth; but as life goes on one sees so many forms of human folly, and idiotic aim and effort, going on round one, that one learns toleration, and is content to keep away from fools—instead of wanting to shake and beat them. At last one even learns to suffer them gladly, like St. Paul; and then, at the end, one recognises in oneself a very big fool—of a very different and worse sort.

I went to the garden in my chair with Fan

yesterday, and walked across it, and through the green-houses, but the pain in my knees and ankles was such that I could have howled like a beaten dog. To enjoy anything was out of the question. I suffered all the rest of the day and most of the night; but there's a theory that I ought to move about as much as I can.

My doctor has given me a prescription, twenty drops of something in a glass of something else—after meals. I loathe being run after with bottles and drop-measures.

It is not an early spring here, but the garden looks well, and there are quite lovely things in the green-houses.

SHELBOURNE HOTEL, *8th April*, 1903.

The little Dante is the joy of my life, but I've had to shut it up and take to writing. I've got a cold, nothing to signify—but there is much dust in this Dublin. The City authorities always wait for a rainy day before sending out their water-carts. I always read the reports of the proceedings of the Dublin Corporation, and the speeches and debates of the City Fathers are quite painfully amusing. The utter ineptitude they show for doing anything, or carrying out any plan, is only equalled by their vehemence in trying to force themselves—or their nephews or cousins—into well-paid posts; and their violent efforts to oppose their colleagues, who do the same. The purpose, sanitary or otherwise practical, for which the meetings are convened, is scarcely mentioned; and nothing is ever decided upon or done. The waste of public money is

serious. So is the utter inability of English people to understand, or realise, what Ireland really is, and how she ought to be governed.

This is a fine day, and Stephen's Green looks gay with young foliage, brilliantly green turf, and beds of tulips and hyacinths. Seagulls are calling on the water-fowl; the lake is streaked with ripples of light, in the wake of swans and ducks rushing after one another. Through the reeds of the islands one catches glimpses of mother-birds sitting on eggs. It is such a pleasant look-out.

SHELBOURNE HOTEL, DUBLIN,
April 17th, 1903.

We must go home, as this hotel will soon be full for Punchestown; and later on 600 are coming to it for that idiotic Motor-race.¹

All Ireland is inspired with a wild frenzy for making money. A farmer in Kildare is asking £20 for allowing people to encamp in a field, the annual rental of which is 10s. The fuss is in full blast now, though the event won't come off till July. It is very curious how we Irish jump and grab after unexpected and unearned money, and won't trouble ourselves to gain it by a little extra daily work. I hate the idea of the Race, it all sounds so dangerous. . . .

Never did any one give me such a delightful present as your gift of "Dante." It is a real joy for ever. I don't know how I got on without it for so long! I had a copy of "Dante"; but it is unhandy,

[¹ The Gordon-Bennett Race.]

and there are no helps. Cary's translation is horrid; and all English verse fails to express the original meaning. But in your gift it is quite perfect. . . .

The bad weather is over at last, so we are able to drive. There are lovely drives about Dublin, but the state of the roads is a disgrace to civilisation. And so is the conduct of the Dublin Corporation. To read the reports of their meetings, and consultations, is like reading the dialogue of a very bad Farce. They start a debate about dust-heaps and gutters, and in two minutes they begin to scold and revile one another, and ask rude personal questions, and call each other names. This sort of thing goes on for hours, till the meeting breaks up before a word is said about the dust-heaps and the gutters.

The waste of time and enormous waste of money is really incredible. And these are the people for whom Home Rule is desired by the ignorant and amiable Saxon. . . .

HARRISTOWN, *April 20, 1903.*

Well, we are home again;¹ but have been very busy unpacking and settling. It is dreadfully cold, but good weather for gardening and sowing. I cough still, and am horribly limp and lifeless, and the very smallest thing is an effort. My pen feels as heavy as a shillelagh; and my legs threaten to fold up and drop me any moment; and my wits are nowhere. . . .

[¹ After some weeks in Dublin.]

Oh, how could you think the Judge¹ would play a literary trick, or have anything to say to a hoax? It's the very last thing he would or could do. His preface to Gerald O'Connor tells the Genesis of the book clearly. The only fictionish thing about it is his having written it in the first person—as he tells the reader plainly.

Personally, I own I never heard of Gerald O'Connor before. But that's because I always turned a deaf ear to all the swaggering talk about "the family." G. O'C. was one of the Wild-Geese, and was brother to our direct ancestor Maurice, who "apostatised," became a Protestant—and owned Gartnamona and a good deal more. It's not the kind of book I like, but it's genuine, and a true chronicle. . . . I can't talk, and I can't bear being talked to. I am quite happy with my "Dante." These three little volumes are the only books that don't weigh a ton in my boneless hands. . . .

HARRISTOWN, *April 25, 1903.*

I am afraid it was "Punchestown" that delayed all our letters, and demoralised everybody. It is always so here. Special trains ran all day; and the unspecial ones that carried unconsidered trifles, such as mail-bags, had to wait about on sidings; and I suppose all messengers regarded the Race-course as "on the way" to wherever they were going. I have not yet read "Gerald O'Connor."

[¹ Judge O'Connor Morris had written an account of a member of his family, Gerald O'Connor, the truth of which Miss Bishop evidently did not believe.]

Willy has made a sort of historical romance, woven round the character of a man who certainly lived. I don't think the book the least invalidated by the fact that my mother and her sisters knew nothing of it, and never heard of G. O'C. I do not think my grandfather and grandmother took any interest in family traditions. They were not the sort of people who grubbed in old family tin-boxes, and studied dusty documents, or dreamt of distangling hopeless skeins of Irish history—tales of feuds and factions. These things delight my cousin, the Judge.¹ He has a genius for research, and for piecing together broken bits of information. It is quite a common thing for some such exploring and excavating person to spring up in a family, and cause records to "leap to light"—tales of 200 years ago quite unknown to the succeeding generation. See how Miss Young's poking about in museums, public libraries, files of old newspapers, burying-grounds, documents at the Record-Office, brought to light lots of facts about the La Touches 200 years ago, facts (and even existence of relatives) quite unknown to the last or present generation of the breed. . . .

Percy² was here just now. He hates the idea of the Motor-race,³ and says he won't look on at it; and considers the whole thing so frightfully dangerous that it ought never to be allowed. Irish people hate rules and discipline, and will make a point of getting into all the forbidden places.

[¹ Judge O'Connor Morris died 1904.]

[² Mrs. La Touche's son.]

[³ The Gordon-Bennett race was run quite near Harristown in 1903.]

There is no hope that it will be stopped. It is a big International affair—and all the principal arrangements are made. That bit of road between Kilkullen, Athy, and the Curragh is said to be the best suited for the purpose of all the roads in Europe! Mints of money are to be spent. Pairs of men are to be posted every quarter of a mile to keep animals and children off the road. Police and military are to patrol, and bugles to be sounded at the approach of the cars.

Very good rules. But we Irish can't see a rule without trying to break it; and we generally succeed. The papers say that "rural England" hates and loathes motorists, and would never welcome a Race of them, but Ireland looks upon "Sport" as an "eternal joy." That's not it; the joy lies in picking up and spending lots of money without having worked for it!

HARRISTOWN, *May 20, 1903.*

Yes, we Irish *are* absurd. There was a Nationalist meeting at the Rotunda the other day. Mrs. M. (M. G.) raised Cain; a general fight ensued. It is reported that the Lord Mayor threw a chair at somebody, his friends and enemies threw everything that could be thrown at everybody, and several wounded patriots were carried to the hospitals. That is Home Rule, that is United Ireland! The combatants were all Nationalists, and the question under consideration was "how we should receive the King of England." The Lord Mayor would not promise anything, or tell how he meant

to act. Mrs. M. pressed the question; *her* followers yelled and said ugly things. The Lord Mayor would not throw a chair at a lady, but he may have thrown it at large, and so the room was alive with flying chairs. The modern Joan of Arc stood like a statue and never turned a hair.

HARRISTOWN, *June 17, 1903.*

Do, do send us some rain! Our little world is dying of thirst and cold, two evils that do not generally go together in June. The gardeners are busy watering the flower-beds, but one pities the poor flowers under such cold shower-baths of our hard water.

The "Master" is in a despairing frame of mind. He says the first chapter of the Prophet Joel exactly describes the state of things here, but *I* don't see any locusts! The half-dead ash-tree by the river is being cut down; the sods all round it are removed and rolled up, a deep¹ excavation surrounds the root, and men are cutting at it with axes. Poor dear, it will soon fall. It is very sad when I remember how many long summer days I've sat under its delicious and abundant shade, with a book or a dog, sometimes a friend, or my dear darling Nobody. And then I never thought I should see it die.

Later.

The poor old ash-tree¹ met death with heroic dignity that same evening. We watched it from

[¹ A beautiful old tree on the lawn at Harristown, which had been dying for years, and, becoming an eyesore, was ordered to be cut down.]

the drawing-room window. Three or four men, quite concealed in the moat round the roots, worked hard with axes and picks, and ten or twelve more played tug-of-war with the stern upright creature, pulling at a rope tied to a high bough. . . . It never wavered or stirred one inch. Its one green plume and many dead branches stood calm against the blue sky. The men at the rope stopped to take breath. For two or three minutes all was still. Then slowly the green plume inclined towards the river, and the creature seemed deliberately to let itself down. There was a solemn crashing sound, and the river flung up a shining glitter of spray, and all was still again. The tree stood like an obelisk to the last moment, refused to obey the pulling rope. It fell in quite another direction; and there it lies. No one will do a stroke of work to-day. It would disoblige S.S. Peter and Paul.¹

HARRISTOWN, *June 22nd, 1903.*

Yesterday we had some sunshine, and could sit out a little, but this morning the cruel wind (E.) makes the dry trees rustle and fling their arms about against a background of hard grey sky. When the rain does come, what a drowning we shall get in this barren and dry land where no water is. . . .

I well remember "Quits,"² and other books by Baroness Tautphœus. I did not like them, but I like a good many novels of the fifties and sixties better

[¹ A holiday of "obligation" in the Roman Catholic Church.]

[² "Quits," "The Initials," "At Odds," by Baroness Tautphœus.]

than modern ones. We no longer go wild about any books, as people did about Miss Burney's ; or as we did about "Uncle Tom's Cabin,"¹ also about "Emilia Wyndham" (a book I don't suppose you ever heard of?), "The Heir of Redcliffe,"² and Anthony Trollope's books.³ Some of these I could read again. I've waded through Mrs. Russell Gurney's letters. Here and there one comes to things that set one thinking ; and I was rather interested about some of the people I knew, but there was too much of it. I rather enjoyed the breezy storminess, and utter thoughtlessness, as well as boyish pluck and callousness, of Basil Lubbock in his "Round the Horn before the Mast" ; but really I think I am the only savage in petticoats who could read it. Do send us some rain !

HARRISTOWN, *July 2nd*,⁴ 1903.

Yesterday was a delightful and amusing day, real Summer, yet not too hot. We went at 10.30 up Primrose Hill to the edge of the high road ; you know the pretty lane with its high ferny banks, all trailed over with blossoming roses and brambles ? Tommy⁵ took Fan out of her harness, and I sat in the chair, and Miss Young on the green bank beside me.

Lots of motors flashed past us, mostly tourists, flying in both directions. One stopped near us ; the horrid thing was thirsty or too hot, or something.

[¹ "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Mrs. Beecher Stowe.]

[² "The Heir of Redcliffe," by C. M. Yonge.]

[³ The last year of her life Mrs. La Touche read with much pleasure several of Anthony Trollope's earlier books.]

[⁴ The eve of the Gordon-Bennett race.]

[⁵ The donkey boy.]

Its owner, an English gentleman, approached us, and I asked him if anything was amiss. He explained that his machine was a very old "Lancaster,"¹ and required two short rests between Dublin and Kilcullen. He stayed with us and talked a long time. He was very agreeable, and was delighted with the cordial pleasantries of the people;—so different, he said, to his own countrymen, who were grumpy to strangers. He petted Fan, and led her up to the old "Lancaster" to be introduced: and he talked to Tommy and had become quite a *persona grata* by the time his companions took him away in the "devil's own yoke."

We remained another hour, hoping to see the racing cars going home from Naas (where they were weighed) to Ballyshannon. By-and-by a very powerful and smart motor stopped near us. Two ladies got out, and climbed up the bank into a field, where they gazed distractedly at the surrounding country through field-glasses, pored over a map, and chattered—no mistaking the English timbre of the four voices. Presently a truly beautiful young man—of the Greek god, or Guy Livingstone type—came up to the Irish witch (me), sitting in its chair, bowed, took off his cap, and asked the way to Kildare. They had taken the wrong road.

I should have liked to have retained the society of that young man. He talked to us very nicely for a few minutes, then picked his two ladies, and the other man, out of the field; and the whole thing vanished in a cloud—as Greek gods do.

These incidents were amusing, and the expedition

[¹ This must be a Lanchester.]

utterly charming; but how people can want to see the race, I can't imagine. Clouds of dust are all that one can see; the solid monsters in their flight are only visible for one second. We saw nothing of the racing fiends, or their cars; they all remained at Naas.

The afternoon was as lovely as the morning; and we respected Miss C——'s wish, and she and her girls came and prowled and enjoyed Harristown till four o'clock, when we gave them a Strawberry Tea in the big drawing-room, and at 5.30 they departed, and at this moment are, no doubt, joyfully watching the race. . . .

HARRISTOWN, *July 17th, 1903.*

The Master¹ is better again, though not free from pain. One cannot expect sudden or thorough recovery, and it is a great thing that for the past four nights he has had many hours of good sleep before the vulture began gnawing him. The Doctors think the ups and downs of the weather has much to do with the recurrence of the pain. He was out a good deal yesterday.

The garden is a great joy and interest just now. There are so many lovely new things, and the more beloved old things are in splendid health and bloom this year. Yes, I should like to build a house for you, close to my pocket; a chalet with six rooms, a weather-cock, a sun-dial, a bathing-machine, and every *inconvenience* you could desire to render life duly ascetic and hygienic.

I don't think I quite go with you about the

[¹ Mr. La Touche was ailing more or less all this summer.]

empty room. Our climate is not always kind, and there *do* be winters! I think one wants one's room to be something of a nest, not quite a box, with books and chairs in it. No need of jewels or silver; but in winter, curtains are comfy, and the sight of a little flowing drapery is pleasant. One wants, too, a little colour to look at; and flowers are not always attainable, nor permanent.

Chaffinches decorate their nests, and the bower-bird, not content with only a nest, builds himself a very smart Gallery, full of coloured ornament, for dancing his *pas de deux* along—a weaver bird, even in a cage, adorns his wire-walls with blades of grass or any coloured stringy things one gives him.

HARRISTOWN, 24th July, 1903.

. . . The King's visit is a *succès fou*.¹ I do not think any pair of Monarchs ever had such an overwhelmingly and sincerely cordial reception. English spectators were amazed, not only at the rapturous demonstrations of the people, but at the perfect order, good management, and good conduct that prevailed everywhere. There was hardly any drunkenness by day or night, which is astonishing, and no bad accident.

I expect Mr. M. and Mrs. M. G. M. are very indignant. It was supposed they would put in an appearance, but they did not.

We sent all our servants to Dublin yesterday;

[¹ King Edward and Queen Alexandra came over to Ireland in July 1903. This was their first visit after their coronation, and they had a wonderful reception.]

and as the day was lovely there, they enjoyed themselves frantically. Here it was far from fine.

Now on quite another subject—Do not carry your real wisdom about food too far. I mean, don't walk too much and eat too little! It is quite possible to do that. I pity your fat friends. I would recommend a luncheon of one hard biscuit, and a small cup of beef-tea (as a stimulant or pick-me-up), no alcohol, no potatoes or roots, no atom, nor drop of anything, between meals: fruit, without sugar, at breakfast and dinner. "Something at eleven o'clock" to be shunned like poison. Let us be a Missionary Society to the Greedy Ones, you and I. You could give a Mission Dinner. . . .

[*To* MRS. JOHN HOTHAM]

25th August, 1903.

The King's visit was a tremendous success; nothing could exceed the genuine and cordial enthusiasm of the people, and the King said and did everything that was sure to go straight to the hearts of the Irish. Few of his English subjects know how to do this, or care to do it. It is by little sayings and doings that we are won or repelled, and our King certainly possesses the kindly tact and quick instinct that is required in order to recognise our virtues and our weaknesses. Even the worst of the Nationalist papers says that "he will be known in future as 'Edward the Peacemaker.'" On the day of the Review arrangements were made to admit the Dublin children, from the lowest slums, into the Park; stands, benches, &c., being prepared for them.

1800 little ragged creatures swarmed in. They behaved beautifully; the King and Queen being much struck with their good conduct, bright faces, and also with their appearance of extreme poverty. Mrs. M. (M. G.) tried to organise an opposition festival of "Patriotic Children, who should wholly refuse to welcome a foreign King"—but she could not muster more than 100. There was not the faintest demonstration of disloyalty anywhere.

Your Uncle has a very good time on board one of the ships in Kingstown Harbour—among delightful people.

We have had absolutely no Summer. Winter clothes are as wearable as they were in January, and we have a fire every evening. We now inhabit the big drawing-room, at tea-time and after. The garden is in great beauty, in spite of much rain and cold.

[To MISS BISHOP]

HARRISTOWN, 22nd October, 1903.

This is a bright sunny day. The colouring of the woods this year is brighter than ever, and yet there has been no frost. Leaves are falling, but not a bough is yet bare; the ample green foliage that clothed the trees has changed into gorgeous raiment of gold and russet and scarlet, and when the sun shines it is a pageant of splendid people moving to right and left, and scattering gold from their long finger ends. There is a playful wind, blowing several ways at once.

Fr. Tyrrell's letter is delightful. I am with him in all he says. People would certainly be happier

if they could obtain the Gift of Moderation which ought to accompany the beautiful motto "nothing matters." Keen, intense bliss is a real pain; and to the friends of the blissful one a sharp terror. It is almost frightening in this changeful world to see any one "supremely happy" among the precipices and possibilities of life. . . .

I do wish I could buy a new backbone, so as to sit up for hours like other people. I never now feel competent or capable of doing any good to anybody, and if I have, as you say, any powers, I am not aware of them, not being a member of the Horner family!¹

[To MRS. O'CONNOR MORRIS]

Dec. 24, 1903.

Thank you for your kind Christmas Greeting. . . . One ought not, I suppose, to look upon Christmas as a gloomy time, but I am afraid it is so to most people who are over sixteen, and particularly to people who (like my husband and myself) are in their ninetieth and eightieth year.

I hope all is well with you and yours. We have had a very sad winter here. My husband is slowly and partially recovering from the very serious illness which attacked him last September. His sufferings were quite frightful, and could only be relieved by a dangerous operation performed by Sir Charles Ball on September 27. He gave us no hope that it would save his life, though it would

[¹ This refers to the immortal Jack of nursery classics. Mrs. La Touche always spoke of people who were either self-conscious or conceited as "members of the Horner family."]

prolong it, and put an end to the awful pain ; therefore Percy and I agreed to consent to it. The result causes us much thankfulness, and the doctors much surprise, for Mr. La Touche is now as well as we can ever hope for him to be ; and he hopes to go downstairs to-morrow. He has to bear a good deal of discomfort, disability, and inconvenience, and is weak—though able to walk about, indoors. His mind and memory are quite wonderfully clear, much clearer than mine. I have all his correspondence to attend to, as he is only now beginning to be able to write with a pencil ; and his two secretaries, Miss Young and myself, are rather hard-worked. What does the Judge think of the muddle and confusion we are in now, thanks to Mr. Wyndham ? “*Sua denta diavolo.*”

[To MISS BISHOP¹]

HARRISTOWN, Oct. 29th, 1904.

We are having lovely white fogs here in the morning, and everything looks lovely in the luminous mist at sunrise. You are right and wise (as usual) about the relative importance of things, but nothing is really “poky.” The broadest view of the universe shows that the tiniest duties may lead to enormous issues. We can’t possibly say “this is small” or “this is large.” It is only our own limited perceptions that apply those terms. A midge is an animal as wonderful as an elephant, and the microscope suggests as big problems and subjects of thought as the telescope.

[¹ This letter was one of the first written after Mr. La Touche’s death. He died September 17, 1904.]

We are very busy, but I try hard not to see the pathetic side of all that is happening to me. There is so much to be done, I try not to "bite up the bits" of woe which every hour thrusts into my soul's mouth. They do leave a bitter taste, though. A ghost-raven keeps crying "never more" at every turn.

The flower-beds before my windows are being cleared, and replanted with Spring things that I shall never see. The wind in my elm-trees roars, or whispers "Good-bye." There is to me a farewell expression upon everything, from the distant mountains down to the near sweet-briar bushes I planted years ago. This is the time of year when our out-door works are being done, and changes made. I see things going on, and men at work, out of the windows, but I shall never see the results. As Mrs. Browning's Lucifer said, "All things grow sadder to me, one by one."

HARRISTOWN, *Nov. 2nd, 1904.*

This sad month has begun sadly, with the gloomiest of skies, raw damp air and mists no longer luminous with veiled sunshine; but here we do not need candles in the morning. Your walks in filthy London are a marvel to me. Are not all your friends amazed?

Yes, I believe we are going to have a bad winter; and much poverty, and possible sedition. Meanwhile, here in Ireland priests, monks, and nuns are swarming, new (and expensive) "hives" arising everywhere, much gold and silver honey gathered into them, to the detriment of the poor.

If you can bear to read really clever stories of Irish peasant life, such as would bring true pictures before the Saxon mind, and show the sincere and pathetic side of our errors and absurdities, get "Paddy Risky," by some one who calls himself "Andrew Merry." The book is anything but merry, if you read it as a thinker. The name is absurd. "Paddy Risky" is a horse whose peasant owner thought he was naming it after the pianist. Read first the second story, "The Bell of St. Finians." They are much better, and more serious than the Somerville and Martin Ross sketches.

Our rooms are gradually assuming a dreary dismantled appearance, such as they never had before, and the air is full of sorrow.¹ I seem, too, to have many sorrowful letters, and in sympathising with others I try to forget myself. — has become quite a professional invalid, never ceasing to pity herself, and utterly regardless of any one else. Heaven preserve me from ever getting like that!

When you see Miss Zimmerman do tell her when she comes to Ireland that I hope she will come and lunch with me if I am alive. Or if more convenient to her, I could give her a good luncheon at the Shelbourne. . . . Do read, too, "The Challoners;"² there is a great deal in it about music that I want you to explain to me. Could any of your musical friends sit down and play extempore on the piano a description or tone-portrait of a rather odd lady, the sound-picture

[¹ Mrs. La Touche left Harristown on November 21.]

[² By Ernest F. Benson.]

being so like her, that those of the audience who knew her, recognised it at once? *Je m'y perds.*

HARRISTOWN, Nov. 7, 1904.

. . . This is the very saddest time of all the year, and for you especially,¹ but I have a terror of anniversaries and annual accessions of past miseries. When they come I try hard to think of something difficult that has to be done. There is always something. And the experiences of this past year have changed my mind for me.

The "Immensities and the Eternities," remaining a mystery, have ceased to be a fear, and have now become a lively Hope. I seem now to see a good many Harbour-Lights.

You know as the night darkens the stars come out, or if they don't, one knows it is only our earth's low clouds that hide them. . . .

You are right; we can always bear what can't be avoided, but we have a right to avoid what can't be borne. . . . Jealousy is, I believe (from reading about it especially in Horace's "Odes"), the strongest and most hurtful passion any one can give way to; it fairly poisons the blood. . . .

You say there is always enough bread and butter everywhere, but that is an optimistic view of the subject. I've more than once found myself in hotels where the bread and butter were such that a bite of the one, and a sniff of the other, were much more than enough; and one pinned one's faith to bacon and eggs, not faultless, but just eatable. . . .

[¹ Mrs. Bishop died November 6, 1898.]

I've no objection to the smart lady Mr. Stapleton knew, who went in a 'bus and wore priceless furs. Why should we have everything to match? One may love fine clothes, and yet be quite indifferent about means of locomotion. It might as well be said that one ought to live on ortolans and champagne and sleep between satin sheets if one happens to possess piles of diamonds and ropes of pearls. . . .

HARRISTOWN, Nov. 1904.

We had a scarlet sunrise, "with his meteor-eyes and his burning plumes outspread."¹ It was lovely, but a bad sign; still the day is fine. . . .

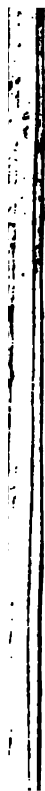
My experiences of the last twelve months have developed my fortitude and conquered my "nerves" and other weaknesses to a great extent. I wish I could make people understand *that* fact. The river and the elm trees comfort me by their steady sameness, as the stars do when I see them from my bed. They *say* nothing, from themselves, but they transmit endless and consoling messages from the Unseen. . . .

How very differently people estimate the importance of things, or the causes of other peoples' joys and sorrows! I am supposed to have come down in the world. In reality I have gone up to a truer and simpler life, and better aims, and a clearer vision, in the Light that comes with Even-tide. Of course, the change from my home of sixty-two years is full of pain, and one is cut to the heart every minute. Yet I am determined to keep my

[¹ From Shelley's "The Cloud," Part III.]



HARRISTOWN HOUSE
From the Liffey



backbone straight, and my head well up. With level eyelids fronting the TO COME, and all the dark of the world. One *must* keep sentiment at bay ; real sorrow seems to me to tear off that fringe. . . .

SHELBOURNE HOTEL, DUBLIN, Nov. 1904.

No ; I can't sympathise with people who go out to luncheon or dinner primarily to eat, and secondarily, for the pleasure of your company. It is quite a horrible idea. In my time people would have been ashamed to show an interest in the *eaty* part of an entertainment, however greedy they might be. From the time I was quite a small child I was taught that it was low and uncivilised to talk or think about the goodness or badness of the dinner one was given ; and I should have been rebuked if, on returning from a child's party, I mentioned the cakes or chocolates (which I never ate). "Tell us about the music and the games. No one cares what there was to eat," my mother would say. The old time idea of a dinner-party was to bring friends together, and to make people acquainted. They were given plenty of ordinary, everyday food, nothing special ; the only thing thought of being to take care to have enough. But they had a great deal too much wine, and perhaps that was worse. . . . You are right, we in Ireland never provide for anything. We are delightful people, but supremely ridiculous, both in our ideas and our ways of carrying them out. One must live in Dublin to feel and see the gigantic absurdities we perpetrate in the name of "self-government."

The proceedings of the Lord Mayor and Corporation at meetings for the transaction of municipal business are just a succession of low comedies. They never seem in earnest, except when fighting with each other; and they invent wonderful new terms of abusive rhetoric, occasionally throwing the chairs across the place. Everything they do is done wrongly, and has to be undone. Public money is recklessly flung about, over the heads of the rate-payers, who do make moans, but go on voting as they are told.

DUBLIN, Nov. 29, 1904.¹

This gruesome month is almost over. Why has it brought us the dreadfulness of winter added to the dyingness of autumn?

None of the prophecies of my friends about this house have come the least true. They included a horrid cook, a dreadful parlour-maid, bad food, bad water; illnesses for me, one after another; burglars, although there was also to be a barking dog!

When one knows one has to do a thing the bright side of that thing turns up at once. When Tommy Atkins is sent to the front he looks for diversion and does not think of the bullets hitting him. We are rigidly punctual, tidy, and orderly. It's something like life on board a yacht, without *mal de mer*. . . .

Why have you had the heels of your boots raised? For perfect walking the heel should be

[¹ This was the first letter written from the new (temporary) home in the suburbs of Dublin.]



on exactly the same level as the front of the sole. We are plantigrade animals ; we don't walk on one toe-nail, like horses. Pointed toes are an abomination, one of Fashion's worst acts of treason against Nature. Shoes should be at their widest round the toes. Some day our shoes will be like those of Henry VIII., embroidered velvet bags, each with five slashes and blue satin showing through. Nobody walks properly now. People walked much better sixty years ago ; and when I was a child I was taught to put both feet straight down, and on no account to swing my arms. It offends me to see from my windows at the Shelbourne long lines of school girls walking round Stephen's Green, their arms going like pendulums on both sides. In my time that could not be. But nowadays no Touchstone says to his Audrey, "Bear your body more seemly."¹

DUBLIN, *Dec. 8th*, 1904.

I'll try and get the Burne-Jones book² in my next Mudie box. I well remember him and his wife when they lived in Museum Street, and afterwards in Edward's Square, Kensington, where they used to feed the birds in the back garden. They were both delightful people.

We continue to get on well here, and we certainly have a great many visitors ! Ireland is an easy country to live in for its natives and the likes of me. But there *are* things no Saxon can put up with—unpunctuality, no idea of keeping an appointment,

[¹ "As You Like It," Act V., Scene 4.]

[² "Life of Sir Edward Burne-Jones," by his wife.]

nor of speaking the exact truth, no carrying out an order without variations, *ad lib.*

This house is an exception; its owner has established Military regulations here. There's a big clock in the hall with a splendid bass voice, and it is obeyed like a word of command. Our little household of six souls is like the English nation in having "many religions and only one sauce."¹ We consist of one "Anglican Catholic," one "Scotch Episcopalian," one ordinary Irish Protestant, two Roman Catholics, and one Scotch Presbyterian. But we dwell in perfect harmony, and all the various places of worship are near at hand. . . .

There are dreadful hitches about sales of properties here. Unless the Treasury will give several more millions things must come to a deadlock. Landlords, I am told, receive no rents while matters are pending, and they seem likely to pend for ever. The unfortunate landlords have to pay their family charges, keep up their places, &c., and wait and wait for any income at all. Naturally the labourers must suffer, as of course landlords can't give much employment. To my mind Mr. Wyndham's measure² was a disastrous one for Ireland, but it has to be accepted. Your friend, of whom you tell me, as she only has a little Irish land, need not be so rampant. All these Bills and Land Acts can't make much difference to people who do not live in Ireland, depending entirely, as we do, on our rents. People who can afford to do so, ought to be glad to

[¹ A Frenchman's verdict on our nation.]

[² Mr. George Wyndham, who, as Chief Secretary, was responsible for this Land Bill.]

get rid of their Irish property, investing their money in something more secure—a word, by the way, not applicable to any Irish investment. I find it difficult to make my English correspondents understand how very hardly the loyal classes in Ireland have been dealt with by the various statesmen—often irresponsible—who have fondly imagined that they had solved the Irish Question. In Ireland one sees so clearly the truth of Shakespeare's words, "The evil that men does lives after them."¹ . . .

Oh dear! I've had such a penance since I wrote all this. I've had a new coat tried on. It seems to be made of brown-holland, varied with brown paper, trimmed with snips and millions of pins. I nearly died of standing so long. To stand through the Nicene Creed is as much as I can do, and this took as long as all the Creeds together, and the Shorter Catechism besides. I am now dead tired.

DUBLIN, *December 1904.*

I delight in your housekeeping letters. They are an entirely new departure in our correspondence. Our little household works capitally, and I hope, after a bit, life will simplify itself—though at present I do find it very complex. The little maids are all as good as one could wish, and as nice as they can be. Robert does much of the hard work, and is really the pivot on which we turn. About the housekeeping—Miss Young has bought some books written by Mrs. Peel, *Ten-shillings-a-week-for-the-House* books, "The Single-Handed Cook" and

[¹ "Julius Cæsar," Act III. Scene 2.]

"The New House," and she is perpetually studying them, to the total exclusion of all other literature.

Everybody gives us advice, and we receive it gratefully. I know about legs of mutton; and we find turkeys decidedly economical. In my opinion we think and talk far too much about our food, and are likely to become greedy. Bessie¹ does her best to demoralise us. . . .

Tell me about this mysterious Jubilee which is still going on. It's a thing no Protestant can understand, though of course I know all about the transaction in the Roman Catholic Church fifty years ago. Our parlourmaid seems to have done all that was required, and now the cook is hard at it. They have not an idea of the *Why*, but they seem clear about the *How* and *When*. They can't both be out together, so they suffer alternately.²

DUBLIN, Dec. 1904.

All goes well with us here, but we are thoroughly suburban in all our ways and habits. There is an odd sensation of newness about it, quite different from life in a town, or life in a big country place, with outdoor-business and incidents. It has some of the goods and some of the bads of each, but the bads are all such as I am quite insensible to, and the goods such as I appreciate.

[¹ The cook.]

[² In December 1854, Pope Pius IX. promulgated the bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, by which the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception finally became for the Roman Church an article of faith. Hence the constant churchgoing of our maids in 1904—the year of Jubilee.]

Everything goes like clockwork, and there is no muddle. Muddle always spells Failure, to a dead certainty. All the cleverness and good-will in the world is lost and wasted where muddle exists. . . .

We are beginning to count the days till you come, and I am longing to introduce my friend and companion Joe.¹ He has gone out this morning to do the shopping, starting with the great barking and yelping of an emotional dog. When he is told he can't be taken he weeps and whimpers, and crawls sobbing downstairs, with apparently no tail. I do think, dear as he is, an intelligent companion-dog wears one out by his appeals to one's sympathies, and his blatant self-consciousness. One's eager efforts not to disoblige the sensitive neurotic Being, to whom one is a sort of Divinity, are really exhausting to human nerves. Give me a cat, and let that cat be Phyllis. I do wish Joe at ten years old wasn't such a terribly earnest dog. He should have more self-control.

DUBLIN, *Jan. 7, 1905.*

It is not a bit cold now, but the mornings are dark. I have a horrid cold and boring cough, and I was thankful for the "utter quiet" of yesterday, when my solitude was unbroken; for Joe by the way is a most companionable dog, and a long afternoon in his company is most soothing. . . .

Oh yes, I know the varieties of horrid smells belonging to wet fabrics. They can be studied in places of worship and tram-cars. The cause is the nasty oily dressing in the stuff, which, when the

[¹ A dog belonging to the house.]

wetness becomes warmish and damp, evaporates with it, as does the natural oil on a retriever's back. . . .

We had our Canon¹ yesterday, and he told us amusing stories of the children who are inhabiting my *Paradise Lost*.² Twins of seven are an endless delight and amusement to every one. One of them remarked that the world would be a jolly place if all the old people were dead. By "old people" he meant all grown-ups, for he went on to explain that there would be no schools, governesses, or tutors, nothing but boys and girls.

DUBLIN, *Jan. 12th*, 1905.

All I can say is *I* should have been "dancing mad" if I had to keep appointments or be victimised by other people's appointments with strangers in my house. One may be naturally unpunctual and careless, but I don't know how one can miss being corrected of all that as life goes on. It's a fault that punishes itself; for one suffers very much by missing trains, losing opportunities, exasperating one's friends; besides failing in all one's best plans and intentions. I should have thought time and experience would ruthlessly and roughly rub off all that kind of fault. To me it seems that hours and rules give one checks and tugs like strings. Even if one was in a house where luncheon was at 12, and dinner at 5, one could not help conforming

[¹ The Rev. Canon Somerville Large.]

[² Harristown.]

to its laws. I certainly think that at any age we can correct ourselves (to a certain degree) of *any* faults, if we once recognise we have got to do it, and that it troubles other people. That is why I think it is really a social duty to help people against their faults and bad habits by letting them see we feel the effects. But we don't. When people come down late for breakfast we ring bells and send down for things to be "hotted up," and say "Never mind, it really does not matter." Thus we feed the disease and stop the remedy. In the same way we pander to greediness, and to all sorts of small vices in our friends. Though we do the very reverse for them as to their small illnesses.

DUBLIN, *Jan.* 1905.

. . . We'll take care to starve you when you come. You'll have a scruple of toast, and five grains of butter for your breakfast; and other meals to match. What a greedy luncheon you gave your friends, though! Really and truly, I don't think luncheon should ever be a square meal. Coffee is good, and assists the poor over-worked digestive organs; but I would bar cigarettes, and liqueurs. Of course I know everybody does that sort of thing; and that's just a reason why the wise minority should not do it. . . .

I am sending you a little book on dinners; but I wonder much what an ordinary man would say if invited to partake of the menus given. They are not appetising. But I really think the less we are "appetised" the better. It is hard on our digestive

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organs to give them more to do than they are inclined for. I can't imagine how any one can want to eat again of any food that has once disagreed with him. We have learned a good deal from the Japanese, who seem to be the healthiest and strongest race in the world; and quite the simplest and smallest feeders. . . .

We've decided to take a house quite near here; so, when my tenancy of this little house is over, the move won't be difficult. In my future landlord I think I've found the "one just man." If Irish people were like him we might have Home-Rule. He has lived and prospered by sheer industry, and has brought up his son, whom I have also interviewed, to be such another as himself. He possesses many houses, all admirably built, excellent sanitation; and in the great storm of three years ago not a slate or chimney-pot suffered. The house is all I can wish; and we never could be built up, for it looks into a lovely park belonging to the Jesuits. I am anxious about the garden at the new house. It will be my Hortus Inclusus. Louise¹ has done wonders with *her* garden, and so has another cousin here.

DUBLIN, *January 20th*, 1905.

We come into possession of our new house next month, and will begin furnishing by degrees. No, my Florence, I could not *live* in England. You will think it horrid of me, but I hate English ways, manners, and customs, tight respectable virtues, clattering voices, and nasty contemptuous

[¹ The Hon. Mrs. Royse.]

ways of speaking of my country. What would become of me in Anglesea or Sussex? I am much too old to make new friends and take to new surroundings. I know what would become of me if I attempted to do as you suggest, live near London. I should very soon die, although you would be near me.

My one wish is to be out of the hurly-burly, see no more people, trust to the Press for information as to what is going on, and yet not be out of touch with my son, my old interests, neighbours, and friends, and being able to see my kinsfolk as they pass to and from England. It is the greatest relief and cordial to my mind to feel that again I have got a home, and exactly in the right spot. I did so hate the feeling of homelessness, and it is a comfort that both Percy and Annie approve, and are ready to help and encourage. . . . I don't need any encouragement. I have never doubted for a moment what I ought to do; but one *is* grateful for a fair wind in one's sails.

[Written in pencil, the first after a
serious illness]

DUBLIN, *Feb.* 1905.

I am sitting in the sunny window of the room that will be yours when you come, looking out on the corner where four roads meet. I can't yet write real letters, tho' each day I am a little better. It takes so long to write even one line, and it is a sin to be illegible.

There are about six old friends of early days who

have been endlessly kind and sympathetic, and I ought to send them a word or two, but I can't. . . . My dear friend Joe's¹ intelligence exceeds mine! but he and I understand each other. The kitchen-cat has two kittens, named Temperance and Prudence. You tell me about the people you associate with, and I am doing the same to you.

No, mine was not just a case of 'flu to be endured and got over. I had been living in a state of strain and stress for a year and a half, such as *no man* could have borne for a month, and a complete final breakdown was only to be expected. I fought with all my strength as long as the need and the strength lasted, and I want you and every one else to understand and realise that my will and courage never failed. I certainly never had the "depression," or moral collapse that is supposed to follow the 'flu. So my case is quite unlike the sadder one in your experience. I am fighting still, but have very little strength and very limited wits. That's enough about "wee selfie." . . .

My good faithful doctor² has gone off to Rome, to thank the Pope for making him a Knight of St. Gregory, and sending him a beautiful star and medal. Did St. Gregory invent the Powders? My next letter will be inky and less idiotic.

DUBLIN, March 5th, 1905.

. . . This is my first attempt at a letter in pen and ink for many weeks. I've done no writing

[¹ The dog.]

[² Sir Francis Cruise.]

except signing the inevitable cheques. Yes, I've been very ill and frightened every one, except Joe and myself, and very nearly killed Miss Young with anxiety. It was very good of Percy and Annie to send me Dr. Barker, as my doctor was away. . . . Will you be dreadfully bored here with us? I don't keep a "salon." If I tried to it would turn into a "wake," and I am not like E——. That my friends should "rally round" me would be a catastrophe, probably fatal. Give me one at a time—and be the one!

Don't give me any book. It's good of you to think of it, but I've really no mind. Books just now don't appeal to me. I hardly know what a Greek play means. . . . I've got my everyday gown on to-day. No deplorable draperies, nor shawl-signals of distress.

To-day we had an agreeable event. Percy and Annie¹ came to see us in their new motor. They started from Newberry after luncheon, and paid us a good long visit, and would be back in time for tea! . . . What a change from our coaching days!

DUBLIN, *March 11th*, 1905.

. . . The time has come, now I am much better, when I must seriously take up my own correspondence. I do think Dublin shop-people enjoy giving trouble. I mean the feeding-shops. One has only to ask for the smallest leg of Welsh mutton to receive what might be the hind-leg of an elephant.

[¹ Mr. and Lady Annette La Touche.]

The people who are doing the new house, are much better; and our new landlord is an angel particularly well disguised. In fact, I've had much to do with angels lately; and I must keep silent no longer towards my benefactors and helpers.

Joan¹ has rained blessings on me by every post. Lovely, and useful things, and—still more useful—technical and practical advice. She has furnished many houses in the last forty years, and she really understands exactly how things are with us. There are not many people who can put themselves so sympathetically and correctly in the place of another; and from such a distance, too, both of time and space. I hope you won't be too uncomfortable in the little room, nor too cold. But this is a cold house, and its walls are thin. My new house, I am told, is quite the reverse, and is warmer and well-built.

[To MRS. HUBERT BURKE (Miss Bishop)²]

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, DUBLIN, *August 19th, 1905.*

. . . Yes, indeed, children are all the better for praise and approbation; but heads can be turned when the praise is not rightly directed—and it seldom is that—by admiring parents and friends. I do not think an amateur poet should be so praised as to conceal from her the faults and flaws of her work. She should be told that she has not yet lived long enough, or seen, or read, enough to

[¹ Mrs. Arthur Severn.]

[² Miss Bishop married in April 1905 Mrs. La Touche's cousin, Hubert Burke, R.N.]

produce *poetry*, and had better only try to do so as an exercise or a lesson, for criticism and instruction. At the same time, I would praise Dorothy very much for aiming high, for having evidently assimilated and appreciated "the things that are more excellent"; and for the patient industry and disciplined effort proved by her success in writing a sonnet, in absolutely correct form—a really difficult feat. Do you remember Coleridge's rhyming advice to his son (or was it his Grandson?) in which he explains the different metres, and then says—

"If Derwent be innocent, steady, and wise,
And delight in the things of earth, water, and skies,
Tender thoughts in his heart, with these metres to show it,
And some sense in his brain will make Derwent a poet."¹

I think you may be proud of Dorothy.² Hers is quite the best poetical attempt of an *immature* mind I have ever seen, and I have seen a good many. It would be perfectly unnatural and an unhealthy sign if an "unlessoned girl" of sixteen wrote quite original verse. At that age we can only echo, and unconsciously imitate what we have assimilated; and the utmost to be expected from a young writer of verse is to find that he, or she, can appreciate poetry, and has the instinct of trying to give out something of what she has taken in. If Dorothy wrote her sonnet without help she shows great power and skill. The form of the sonnet is absolutely correct, the leading

¹ I am not sure that I have got the last line right, and the book is not here. . . .

[² Mrs. Burke's niece, Miss Dorothy Estlin.]

idea of the tree and branches in "Life's Great Forest" is not a common one. She has not mixed the metaphors, nor made the confused muddle of sonorous and unmeaning words we are apt to produce when we are sixteen. Of course there are a few flaws; it would be a miracle if there were none. You won't find anything as good as this sonnet in Byron's early poems ("Hours of Idleness," a torrent of turbid rubbish), or in Ruskin's young attempts, which have very little merit. . . .

Dublin is peacocking itself and its daughters for the Horse Show¹ next week. I don't see the correspondence between "Chevaux and Chiffons," but "What are you going to wear?" is the question on every female tongue. It is funny to see how Dublin looks upon Punchestown and the Horse Show as the two great Spring and Autumn opportunities for the presentation of young ladies at the Court of Folly. At one or other of these functions they make their first appearance, and win their spurs.

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, DUBLIN, *August 1905.*

You say, "Do we ever think that things are by our own fault?" People who never think *that* must be eaten up with self-conceit. I look back and see plainly that more than half the bad things that have befallen me was by my own sole fault, and P—— has such an exaggerated consciousness of the same kind that I shouldn't be surprised at her saying she was answerable for a wet day or a

[¹ The Dublin Horse Show takes place every year, in August.]

burglary in the town! I sometimes say, "Well, after all you are not exactly the Origin of Evil, as you seem to think."

Annie's¹ last gift to me is a new kitten, another Phyllis, and quite a new sort of cat-character. We are rather be-catted here. The song of love and the cry of battle arise with quite new vehemence from cat to cat, from garden to garden. I am never tired of observing these feline idylls. A black and white Romeo flies responsive to the call of a coal-black Juliet, with four white shoes, who sits on our wall singing, "I arise from dreams of he." Other Romeos in distant groves yell in furious challenge, while under my window the innocent Phyllis and her kitchen companion, Penelope, race after the fallen apples. . . .

It is very cold again and we have a fire. The three little gardens—mine, and one on either side—look battered but brave; the red gladiolus asserts herself in sturdy uprightness; and sunflowers, that were not knocked down in the late high wind, stand nodding over their fallen fellows; bright coloured, but uninteresting asters stare straight up from brown earth to grey sky. . . .

Yes, of course, children say most original things, and the younger they are the more original.

Things and facts are all unfamiliar and new to them, and from these they derive all their ideas, which they express in language such as never was printed in a book, and to us it seems original.

"Punch's" child stung by a wasp, who said, "He walked about on my hand and was so nice. But

[¹ Lady Annette La Touche.]

when he sat down—" was stating an observed fact, in her own way. Besides, children's minds are full of wonderment and speculative philosophy without any knowledge or experience of words, and names, and sequences; and the things they say when they try to express their ideas, or ask for information, are often wonderful.

But early *art* is quite a different thing. It cannot be anything but imitative; it grows out of what it has fed upon and assimilated. It may take the form of music, poetry, painting, whatever the young mind may produce, but it will be chiefly an echo of the production of other minds; a catchy music that runs in their heads.

I've learned all this from my childhood's experience. I wrote a great many things before I was sixteen, and well remember how all the poetry I read and learned, simmered and crystallised in my brain, and seemed to become my own as expressing the vague thoughts and the hopes and fears of my unripe mind. I never attempted a sonnet; although I did attempt an historical tragedy, in blank verse, after reading a good deal of Shakespeare, and seeing Mazeppa acted at Astley's.

[To MRS. ARTHUR SEVERN]

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, August 1905.

You hold out a bright hope to me, and I am anxious to keep alive and be no worse than I am now till the end of the autumn. It will be such a joy to have you here, if it's not a nasty come-down to you. We will make you as comfortable as ever

we can, and pray that you won't "up and say," "Oh dear, this is not what I'm accustomed to. When is the next train to somewhere else?" October is generally a fine month in Ireland, and there are really lovely drives about here. I wish we had more than one spare room, and something better than a humble and Irish suburban establishment. Then I would ask all Brantwood to come and empty itself into Slieve-na-man. . . . I should like to see Arthur and all your children ; especially Herbert, whom I remember in his chrysalis state, and now think of with respect and admiration. . . . The weather is no longer hot and I am much less breathless since it changed. I don't know what the Dublin County Council, the Corporation and my Landlord, Mr. Byrne, would say if I presumed to whitewash my roof,¹ and so spoil the symmetry of "the Road" (I am afraid of "the Road"). Can you bear people who have no musical instrument in their drawing-room, no carriage, and only the warmest of welcomes to offer?

[To MRS. HUBERT BURKE]

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, DUBLIN, *August, 1905.*

I quite agree with Lady Margaret Domvile, and so does everybody I know, that the Land Bill² was a sad business and that Irish affairs are going to the dogs. Or rather, to the wolves, to whom English legislation has thrown the loyal classes.

[¹ The summer had been very hot, and Mrs. Severn had suggested our whitewashing the glass roof.]

[² Mr. Wyndham's Bill.]

Every one here knows the harm the Catholic Association has done, and is still doing. The little penny book¹ set a ball rolling; and it roll still, to the detriment of all good citizenship, and honest trade.

My new big clock arrived yesterday, and is built up in the hall. It is such a comfort, and we can now be really punctual; its voice is audible in every room. . . .

We are having most capricious weather, such abrupt changes; the poor barometers and thermometers are wearing themselves out jumping up and down. A menace of Autumn is in the air. She is not flying her colours yet, but she has shaken down some shabby green leaves, and turned the remaining ones into crinkly brown paper, which makes sorrowful sounds as they are blown about. . . .

I think I've more experience of boys than you have. Three or four boys were my childhood's companions and playfellows, and I have three male descendants of whom the first was not exactly exemplary as a boy; but none of them did any mischief, nor would think of shying stones, except as a game with a legitimate aim. Our boys would have considered mischievousness extremely low and vulgar (the term "bad form" not being then invented), and there was, and is still, a marked difference between the instincts of well-born and low-born boys. It was in my time conspicuously evident, and is so still. In thinking over all the families I have known, I perceive that girls were

[¹ A small book urging Catholic employers of labour only to employ their co-religionists.]

more given to rude thoughtlessness and daring mischief than boys, whose games and amusements were a sort of discipline, and tended to law and order, and respect for the rights and property of others. Miss Young, too, has had great experience of boy pupils, and agrees to all of this.

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, *August 15th, 1905.*

I am alone to-day ; Phœbe¹ has gone to Charleville, but I expect Canon W—— to come. I like him too, but I do not find “friction with other people’s minds” (even the highest type of minds) personally useful or instructive when it takes the form of “talk.” I can’t assimilate it. In my own experience I have had and enjoyed (for I *can* enjoy it) plenty of talk with such minds as Ruskin’s, George MacDonald’s, and others, but I found more use and instruction in one page of their writings than an hour of battledore and shuttle-cock conversation with them, though it was a pleasant game. *Now* it can’t be that, for me, because even a little talking takes away my breath, and I have to reply by pants and gasps to the “frictionary” interlocutor.

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, DUBLIN, *Sept. 1st, 1905.*

. . . The swallows are in great excitement this morning—swarming in rapid flights against the grey sky over the little garden, and dashing across our window, throwing sudden live shadows at us. Oh, I do love the outside things, and creatures, and all their works and ways. I never quite realised what

[¹ Miss Young.]

an endless diversion and deep interest they could be to me till I came to live here, where I have very little else to impress me. The window of my sitting-room is to me as the box of a theatre. The drawing-room window is less enchanting. Horses, ponies, and small children are my objects of contemplation there.

I am glad you saw the red tobacco. I couldn't fail to "spot" a new flower anywhere, and I don't want any one to point it out, though I do want some one to introduce me to it, and tell me exactly who it is, and what cousins it has. The day I went in my chair to Stephen's Green I saw quite a number of flower-people outside my circle of botanical acquaintance—distinguished strangers to whom I would like an introduction. . . .

I really can't write for watching the swallows, who are arranging themselves into flying groups of twenties or so—making up their travelling-parties. I fear a good many are gone. I shall miss that merry company when they leave the lovely animal-dramas that I watch from my window. Autumn is nearly upon us; the big trees opposite us in Mill-town Park rustle and make papery noises all night—the dry, sad noise that leaves make before they fall.

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, DUBLIN, *Sept. 12th*, 1905.

. . . It is quite cold here, colder than with you in London. But it seems good for me. Not having sufficiently forgotten the shaking of yesterday, I won't drive to-day. I do wish the Corporation would mind their business, instead of reviling each

other about the Lord Mayor's ridiculous salary, or about the sin or virtue of singing "God save the King." The road round Stephen's Green is passable where the tram lines are, but hills and hollows and deep holes near Lord Iveagh's house. Livers may be better for it, but not carriage springs. "Nothing Matters" ought to be our national motto. One must live in Dublin to find out the intense hatred of work that lives in the souls of the so-called working men and women. Every day we begin as late, and end as early as we can, and do as little as possible in the shortest time.

The hedgerows are getting shabby, and all the wild berries are falling off; the very hot Summer having ripened them too fast, and given them little stalks. There are not many kinds of birds that eat insects and fruits too. Finches, for instance, don't eat flies or worms, and blackbirds and thrushes would not eat seeds or berries. The leaves are not falling much yet, and the foliage is only shabby, not brilliant. The little suburban gardens are gay still, but overgrown and untidy. I shall be glad when all Nature's funerals are over. In Ireland Nature is slow, like the rest of us.

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, 13th October, 1905.

I know you can't settle a date for your coming yet, but any date will suit us. I have no engagements for any one to come this side of Christmas, nor have I any intention of leaving this abode while I live.

To-day it is blowing hard from the West, and

the leaves are falling in earnest, but some of the trees still retain their shabby rusty green leaves. The big trees overhanging the wall before our windows are a wonderful and interesting study of foliage in autumn, and will soon be bare enough for us to gaze on the passing forms of the students inside.

I have another interesting study in biology, the infantile characters of cat-baby "Phyllis" and dog-baby "Tiny." There are strange and subtle profundities in the souls of cats, and no two are alike in disposition. When the little dog arrived, Phyllis, who was supposed to be an ill-tempered cross wretch, no fit company for a decent dog, because she had spat, sworn at, and attacked her own little brothers, was to be kept at a distance—the puppy being much smaller than she is. Well, she stood and gazed at him with no "love in her luminous eyes" but no ill-will, and sat down afar off. Presently, the puppy being cold, and missing his mother and sisters, began to whine and whimper. Phyllis walked up to him, back and tail well down, patted him gently all over with clawless paws, lay down beside him and kissed his nose, inviting him in purr language to sleep in her arms! They are now inseparable, eat out of the same dish, and sleep in the same small basket. The puppy thrives, and whines no more.

[*Some weeks later*]

Our impish Tiny is admired by every one, but is rather an afflicting dispensation at home; he is frivolous, and fearfully bold and lively, conceited

and selfish, and utterly disobedient. He has reduced our handsome Phyllis' coat to rags, and her tail, which was quite beautiful, is becoming a flexible hairy stick! Oh dear, I never meant to possess a dancing dog who never sits down, and invents his own endless ballets, devouring, at the same time, all the scenery and properties. It is wonderful to me how the servants, with one accord, not only endure, but love him. He has a deceitfully pretty face.

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, *November 1905.*

I am very stupid to-day, as I've had cardiac asthma all night, and a more horrid visitation than that in the night watches could not be imagined.

We miss Joan terribly.¹ She was so keenly sympathetic and helpful about all the little concerns that one does not in the least expect one's friends to care about. She has thought out all sorts of plans to make my little garden a bit of Paradise. She has given us heaps of plants, and is sending us more. It is such an interest to me, as I sit at my upstairs window. . . .

You must make yourself clothes on the Alice pattern² to come here. "Steel and iron, trimmed with bronze shavings." Also, a pair of housemaid's gloves, lint, and sticking-plaster.

The new dog is a terror though very small—a toy fox-terrier—he bites so very hard, and never lets go. It's all play and merriment on his part, but the motive of a biting-dog doesn't make much matter to the bitten human (or feline) animal. . . .

[¹ Mrs. Arthur Severn had been staying with Mrs. La Touche.]

[² "Alice in Wonderland," by Lewis Carroll.]

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I had a good day with my nephew and niece.¹ She was not knocked up by the journey, and thoroughly inspected this little house in an approving manner. They both knew and were interested in my little affairs, and gave much more encouragement than any one has done yet. It is curious that while all my Boeotian neighbours and friends think me a fool for settling in a Dublin suburb, all my relatives congratulate me on having exactly the right sort of house for the likes of me.

[Last of all. *To Miss YOUNG, who was in Scotland*]

SLIEVE-NA-MAN, *June 1906.*

Your letters are a joy, and it is an added one that you keep to your first intention and return on the day you originally fixed. I hope the crossing will not be a horrid one, and that Britannia will rule the waves—straight.

What good times you have been having! I much want to see that lovely garden sloping up to a wood, and touching on the very road Jeannie Deans walked on! You see I have not forgotten my history *à la* Sir Walter Scott.

Things go on quite well. Florence² is an efficiency, and the whole house goes on "oiled wheels," so do not spoil your holiday by a Martha-like frame of mind.

We have not had many visitors, but —— looked

[¹ Lord and Lady Desart.]

[² Mrs. H. Burke.]

in this morning. I am told she approves of me, so I suppose I am "ripping" and not "rotten"!

The misuse of the English language among the younger generation is to me quite appalling, and I can't help thinking that all sensible people must feel as I do about slang. . . . I see plainly that this modern pose of not being considered innocent is only a pose, and is assumed to hide a good deal of ignorance. . . .

I am afraid that in your absence we do talk and think a good deal about our food, though we eat very little, and I am quite ashamed of our dialogues.

Life is not so simple after all, when every bit of machinery has to be thought of and talked about, when one might be meditating on the mysteries of Time and Space.



POEMS BY MRS. LA TOUCHE



POEMS

NOVEMBER THOUGHTS

I LOOK around me o'er the saddened earth,
I gaze into the clouds, and see no sky,
No sound of Nature's soft harmonious mirth
Lessens the sorrow of the wind's long sigh ;
The turbid river wails in flowing darkly by.

There's nothing left but hope to make me glad ;
Joy banished when the moon of harvest waned :
I scarce remember all the bliss I had
When primrose stars their zenith had attained,
Or when the crimson thorn its reddest glory gained.

It was a dream—a thing that could not be !
Gold never shone upon that furzy hill !
No throng of tender blossoms clustered free
Upon the thorny tangle by the rill !
And yet the dead reeds shake their broken plumage
still.

Ah yes—the Winter wind that stirs the reeds,
The ruined reeds, in Summer time so fair,
Sings a low song of hope to one who heeds
The mystic voices trembling in the air ;
“Not Death,” it sings, “but Life, is latent every-
where.”

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"Believe," it sings, "believe the happy Past—
Look back thro' daylight, not thro' mist of
dreams ;
Life, blossom, sunshine, are the things that last—
The deathly force which now eternal seems
Will die beneath the smile of April's morning
beams."

Thus thro' the broken reeds the wind sings low,
The same stern wind that beats the last leaf
down ;
And I remember how I used to know
By drifting fall of scaly leaflets brown
How kindly gales prepared the woodland's emerald
crown.

Not death, but sweetest sleep of hoarded life ;
Not silence, but a pausing melody.
Peace, not destruction, guides the ordered strife
Where rushing waters rave, and sad winds sigh.
Confusion—evil—pain—these are the things that die.

A WET DAY IN SEPTEMBER

Now tearful Summer dwindles to its close,
The leaves fall tarnished from the last white rose ;
No perfume lingers in the heavy air—
The Earth seems sleeping in a mute despair ;
All one unvarying plain of gloomy green,
The grey horizon bounds the cheerless scene ;
While slowly drifting on, the untiring rain
Falls blighting on the fields of wasted grain,

And the black river gliding turbid by
 In doleful pools repeats the doleful sky—
 So from the landscape's too familiar gloom
 I turn my eyes, and fairer visions come.

Lit by the golden dream-light of Regret
 The scene grows radiant, and 'tis Summer yet.
 Summer is burning in the April days,
 And Earth lies tranced and drinks the genial
 rays—

Earth, liberal, loving, fair—not such as this
 Where daisies own a Sunbeam's passing kiss—
 But rich, warm, glowing, passionately rife
 With all the scents and hues of lavish life;
 True Earth, not Dreamland—yet more fair than
 dreams

Its lilled plains and olive-haunted streams—
 More bright than Dream-waves shine its sunlit
 seas,

More sweet than Dream-air floats its fragrant
 breeze—

More blest than Dream-life pass the charmèd hours
 Between its sky of light and earth of flowers.
 Alas! that save in dreams I may not see
 The only land that can be home to me.

“EXPECTANS EXPECTAVI”

'Tis winter still: the birds that cannot sing
 Twitter their dreams of Spring.
 Scarce heard, upon the cold slow breeze doth float
 Many a faltering note

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Of last year's thrushes, that have yet to learn
 Thrush music to discern ;
For Love, that teaches all things, lies asleep,
 And wingèd creatures creep
Unconscious of the folded force that lies
 Waiting for Summer skies ;
And for the strong awakening that is near,
 The joyous time of year.

For which we wait—I, and the dumb wild things
 That cannot feel our wings.
The wet brown earth, alive with swelling seeds,
 And starred with sprouting weeds
Awaits her robe of glory, which the powers
 Of wind and snow and showers
Wove in these secret places, through the drear
 Unhappy time of year :
When I, who only saw the present gloom,
 Sat sullen by the tomb
Of all the dear dead things that were to me
 Solace and sympathy.

But now, the earth and I can wait in peace,
 Expecting the release
Of Winter's captives, which in darkness deep
 Are stirring in their sleep ;
As in my heart the hopes I thought were dead
 Stir in their living bed—
Stir, but awake not. Ah! will Spring revive
 Hopes that are scarce alive?
Will buried love and banished joy return
 When Summer sun-rays burn?

I know not. But I know the world will be
Gladsome and fair for me
As for its birds, and weeds, and creatures low
Since God has made me so,
That to all these my soul is set in tune :
And if I live till June
There will be bloom and sunshine in my days,
And I shall feel the rays
That colour roses colouring my life
With rose-hues rich and rife,
So that I shall not shiver in the grey
Cold ending of my day :
And, though no friend in human form be near,
I shall not lack for cheer.
Therefore, we do not pine, the earth and I,
Our joyful time is nigh !

A LIFE'S LESSON

1.

LET me record what Life has taught me
In the lapse of its five and forty years ;
Evil and good those years have brought me,
Sunshine and gladness, rain of tears ;
Its flowers are faded, its wine is spilled :
Alike are banished and unfulfilled
Its noblest hopes and its darkest fears.

2.

I have learned that life is a hopeless tangle,
That we waste our pains if we seek the clue ;
That words will clash and opinions jangle
Till we reach the Kingdom where all is true ;

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That neither preacher, nor priest, nor friend,
Can help a soul to its journey's end,
Or clear the maze it must struggle through.

3.

I have learned that our wisdom and skill and
knowledge
Are the efforts of children here below,
On the lowest benches of Truth's great college
To guess at what grown-up Angels know.
As the child of five to the child of four
Is the Sage to the Fool—and our deepest lore
Is the lore of a babe that begins to grow.]

4.

I have learned that the best and wisest nature
Is the childlike, simple, ungifted one,
That is content to be God's small creature,
And asks no questions from Star or Sun :
That runs the race that is set before it
By the common daylight shining o'er it,
And waits for more till the race is run.

5.

I have learned that the commonest gifts and graces
Are the best and noblest, when all is said :
That peace and kindness, on homely faces,
Are a glow from heaven directly shed ;
That the Devil disguised as Angel of Light
Has much to do with the soaring flight
Of the restless heart and the seething head.

6.

I have learned that Genius is only fever,
 Raving delusion, and morbid dream :
That the healthy spirit is wise, not clever,
 Knows the things that are from the things that
 seem ;
Loves, and works, and has little to say ;
Will feel next year as it feels to-day ;
 And is slow of thought, as we idly deem.

7.

I have learned that our wild and weak emotions
 Are not worth a place in tale or song ;
That we need not trust our sublimest notions,
 For they are sure not to last us long ;
That the best we can do is to hold our peace,
And love our neighbour, and wait release
 With a helpful hand and silent tongue.

8.

I have learned that a friend who is worth the
 having
 Is a friend who will hurt you now and then ;
Will turn to ice at your sickly craving
 For sympathy uttered by word or pen ;
Will pull you with brave rough hands away
From the altars you build to your gods of clay,
 And break them down lest you kneel again.

Q

9.

I have learned that Pleasure is far more pleasant
 When it grows from some common and costless
 thing
 That is offered alike to prince and peasant,
 Than from such as our wealth and toil may
 bring.
 That we ought to play with the playthings given
 For His children's use, by our Lord in Heaven,
 Which never wear out, nor fail, nor sting.

10.

That the toys that we make for our own diversion
 Are dangerous things that will cost us dear ;
 We are proud of the taste which is all perversion,
 Till it turns to loathing, as life grows sere,
 And then God help us, if we are left
 Of all our illusions and joys bereft,
 In a flowerless Autumn, cold and drear.

11.

But the happiest lesson my life has taught me,
 The one that my heart has learned the best,
 Thro' all the pain that the years have brought
 me,
 Thro' disappointment and sore unrest,
 Is to love and rejoice in, more and more,
 The treasures of Nature's boundless store,
 The innocent things that God has blest.

12.

Ah! how I thank my God for making
This joy in His Works a part of me,
So that my heart in its bitterest aching
Can be glad in the gladness of bird and bee ;
Can turn to look at a fern or flower
Soothed in its darkest and saddest hour
When a friend's kind touch would be agony.

13.

Oh, faithful Nature! as life declineth
She grows more dear to this soul of mine :
A purer light on her sweet face shineth,
A glory deathless, a stamp divine ;
The trees of earth seem more fair than ever,
As I think of the tree by the Heavenly River,
And Spirit and Sense in the joy combine.

14.

The passionate glow of the sweet Spring Season
Comes warm to my heart as in days of old ;
Its beauty is dear for a purer reason,
And dearer it grows as the years unfold.
Mountain and meadow and herb and tree
Are the truest of all true friends to me,
And the best of their story is not yet told.

15.

For if Thou, oh Framers of Souls, hast "made me
Glad thro' Thy Works," as indeed Thou hast ;
If this gladness and hope has ne'er betrayed me
But is stronger now than in bright days past ;

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Hast Thou not taught me to understand
A part of the joy of the Promised Land,
And wilt Thou not lead me there at last ?

THE EVENING OF LIFE

I.

FLING down the faded blossoms of the Spring,
Nor clasp dead roses with regretful hand ;
The joy of Summer is a banished thing :
Let it depart, and learn to understand
The gladness of great calm, the Autumn rest,
The Peace, of human joys the latest and the best.

2.

Yes, I remember how in early days
The primrose and the windflower grew beside
My tangled forest paths, whose devious ways
Filled me with joy of mysteries untied,
And terror that was more than half delight,
And sense of budding life, and longings infinite.

3.

And I remember how, in life's hot noon,
Around my path the lavish roses shed
Colour and fragrance, and the air of June
Breathed rapture. Now those Summer days are
fled,
Days of sweet peril, when the serpent lay
Lurking at every turn of Life's enchanted way.

4.

The light of Spring, the Summer glow, is o'er ;
And I rejoice in knowing that for me
The woodbine and the wildrose bloom no more,
The tender green is gone from field and tree ;
Brown barren sprays stand clear against the blue,
And leaves fall fast and let the truthful Sunlight
thro'.

5.

For me the hooded herbs of Autumn grow,
Square-stemmed and sober-tinted mint and sage,
Horehound and balm, such plants as healers know ;
And the decline of Life's long pilgrimage
Is soft and sweet with marjoram and thyme,
Wet with pure evening dew, not serpent's glittering
slime.

6.

And round my path the aromatic air
Breathes health and perfume, and the turfy ground
Is soft for weary feet, and smooth and fair
With little thornless blossoms that abound
In safe dry places, where the smooth hillside
Lies to the setting Sun, and no ill beast can hide.

7.

What is there to regret? Why should I mourn
To leave the forest and the marsh behind ?
Why towards the rank low meadows sadly turn,
Since here another loveliness I find,
Safer and not less beautiful, and blest
With glimpses, faint and far, of the long-wished-for
Rest.

8.

Is it an evil to be drawing near
The time when I shall know as I am known?
Is it an evil that the sky grows clear,
That Sunset light upon my path is thrown,
That truth grows fairer, that temptations cease,
And that I see afar a path that leads to peace?

9.

Is it not joy to feel the lapsing years
Calm down one's spirit, as at eventide
After long storm the far horizon clears,
The sky shines golden, and the winds subside,
Stern outlines soften in the Sunlit air,
And still as day declines, the restful earth grows
fair.

10.

And so I drop the roses from my hand
And let the thornpricks heal, and take my way
Down-hill, across a fair and peaceful land
Lapt in the golden calm of dying day—
Glad that the night is near, and glad to know
That rough or smooth the way, I have not far to go.

FOR THE VISITORS' BOOK AT
GLENGARRIFF, CO. KERRY

To the sweetest of dreams there's a waking,
To the brightest of days there's an end,
And a sorrowful moment for taking
Last looks at the face of a friend.

What pain like the ending of pleasure?
What shock like a dream dispelled?
How we mourn the intangible treasure
We could not have held.

And now since my holiday's over,
And duty recalls me to live
Where thistles grow thick in life's clover,
Will she sternly refuse to forgive
This weakness of impotent wailing
For a Past so entrancingly bright,
For sunshine and flowers unfailing,
For days of delight?

The dim and delicious recesses,
Where bays of a chrysolite sea
Sleep shaded in tangle and tresses
Of briar and blossoming tree:
The glades where the woodbine and roses
Shine warm in the emerald gloom,
And each flicker of sunlight discloses
Fresh beauty and bloom.

The garlanded Islands are lying
Embayed in an ocean of light,
The ramparts of mountains defying
All winds that can wither and smite:
The paths that are all paths of pleasure,
By mountain and forest and stream,
The sense of a glorified leisure,
A realised dream.

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